



## **Supporting children with 'Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulty (SEBD)' in mainstream: teachers' perspectives**

CHILDERHOUSE, Helen

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**Supporting Children with ‘Social, Emotional and Behavioural  
Difficulty (SEBD)’ in Mainstream: Teachers’ Perspectives**

Helen Childerhouse

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of  
Sheffield Hallam University  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2017

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## Abstract

In this small-scale, qualitative study, the experiences of nine teachers who support learners identified with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) in mainstream primary schools are considered. A narrative approach enabled teachers to share their complex portrayals of practices and feelings about their roles. Perspectives on models of disability and disability rights, performativity, professional identity for teachers, and SEBD, have informed analysis and understanding of the stories teachers told. The study explores how the relationship between teachers' professional identity and well-being and the expectations imposed upon them in a neoliberal influenced education system brings about pressures and concerns. Attempts by the teachers to achieve a balance between what they feel they *ought* to do (to meet policy expectations) and what they feel they *should* do (to meet the entitlements of children) has led to excessive workloads and complex emotional responses. Reflections on the way these teachers constructed discourses about why some children exhibit disruptive and challenging behaviours provide an understanding of how their negotiation of this challenging context impacts on the relationships they form with the children. The findings suggest that teachers experience confusion due to the complexities and contradictions they are faced with when trying to support learners identified with SEBD in an education system which incorporates policies guided by different models of disability. The study concludes by suggesting that teachers' critical reflection on the discourses they have constructed in relation to models of disability could bring about a new way of shaping their practice. It is argued that a rights-based approach to teaching children who exhibit challenging, disruptive and concerning behaviours would emancipate children from the restrictive views and beliefs teachers seem to have developed. Approaches which focus on children's rights to inclusive learning opportunities, which reflect their entitlement to an education, would go some way to addressing the confusion, contradiction and pressures these teachers described.

## **Statement**

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Sheffield Hallam University. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the thesis has been submitted for any other academic award. Any views expressed in this thesis are those of the author.

Signed

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Helen Childerhouse', written in a cursive style.

Helen Childerhouse

30 March 2017

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## Abbreviations and Glossary

BESD	Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
Circle of Friends	“An approach to enhancing the inclusion, in a mainstream setting, of any young person (known as 'the focus child'), who is experiencing difficulties in school because of a disability, personal crisis or because of their challenging behaviour towards others” <a href="http://inclusive-solutions.com/circles/circle-of-friends/">http://inclusive-solutions.com/circles/circle-of-friends/</a>
Circle Time	“Jenny Mosley’s Quality Circle Time (QCT), encompasses a whole-school approach to enhancing self-esteem and building positive relationships in school communities” <a href="http://www.circle-time.co.uk/about/">http://www.circle-time.co.uk/about/</a>
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DES	Department for Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EBD	Emotional, behavioural difficulties
MAST	Multi agency support team
PPA	Planning, preparation and assessment
P4C	Philosophy for Children, “encourages children to think critically, creatively, collaboratively and caringly. We help children, particularly those facing disadvantage, to become lifelong learners” <a href="http://www.sapere.org.uk/">http://www.sapere.org.uk/</a>
SATs	Statutory assessment tests
SEAL	Social Emotional Aspects of Learning
SEBD	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Sets out 54 articles which provide guidance and advice for countries and governments to ensure that the rights of children are met. <a href="http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx">http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx</a>

## **Chapter 1: “I should have done more to listen to them”**

### **1.1 Introduction**

In this study, I consider teachers’ perceptions of what it is like to work with children identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD)<sup>1</sup> in mainstream primary schools. The expectations and structures of the education system in England have changed rapidly over the last three decades (Ball, 2013). This has led to teachers experiencing multiple pressures associated with accountability, changing roles, perceptions of professional identity and new policy implementation, and has contributed to increasing stress levels and concern (Ball, 2003, Goodson, 2014, and Evans, 2011). This qualitative study explores the feelings of teachers who are working to support children carrying the label of SEBD within this complex and challenging context.

A significant amount of research has explored the emotional demands of teaching (Carr and Hartnett, 2001, Troman, 2008; Nias, 1989) and the experiences of teachers working with children identified as having SEBD (Hanko, 2005, Clough, 2005, and Visser, Cole and Daniels, 2003). In addition, different models of disability have posed different questions about how the perceptions of teachers and children are constructed when the concept of ‘special educational need’ is central to learning environments. However, there undoubtedly remains a need to know more about how teachers working with children identified as having SEBD, view their roles and experiences in an education system driven by performance and achievement.

Wanting to look more closely at the experiences of teachers who work with learners who may have been identified as ‘disabled’ is problematic (Dyson, 1998). I cannot claim to understand how the children or the teachers felt in the interactions in the stories told in this study, and I remain mindful that the interpretations are my own. I am not attempting to ‘speak’ for those children or

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<sup>1</sup> I recognise that the term ‘having SEBD’ is contested (Norwich, 1999 and Hodge, 2005) and needs further discussion. This is explored further in section 2.2.

teachers, but do try to bring to light the teachers' portrayals of relationships and dilemmas that they experience. Nor do I claim to present a hegemony or uniformity to their portrayals – each experience is complex, conflicting and personal. What I do seek to achieve is some understanding of how teachers feel about what it is like to support specific learners in their classrooms. In doing so, I hope that this small-scale study may encourage further discussion amongst those with an interest in this area.

Seeking out the constructions of the oppressed, therefore, is not simply some exercise in curiosity, undertaken by the objective researcher of positivist methodology. Rather, it is a political act which critiques the constructions of the oppressors and makes possible emancipatory action which will transform the oppressive relationships of the groups involved. (Dyson, 1998, p6).

In *Articulating with Difficulty* (Clough and Barton, 1998), Dyson critiques the voice of the researcher and/or professional who cannot understand the experiences of the 'oppressed' and urges caution amongst those researchers who may be tempted to speak on behalf of others. However, he does recognise that "the promotion of rational debate by professional intellectuals" (p12) is one way to recognise the conflicts and challenges experienced by all involved and this is what this study tries to achieve.

This introduction begins with my story and how this stimulated my interest in how practice can be shaped by listening to what teachers say about how they feel about what they do in the classroom and the impact that divergent understandings of disability and 'difficulty' can have on this. It provides a brief overview of the educational context and changing culture within which teachers work. It then considers and outlines the study's aims, methodology and structure.

## **1.2 My story and starting point for this study**

The following is an example of storytelling from my own experience. It highlights how one event helped me to identify why this focus area may be



relevant for further consideration and for the rationale of the PhD study. It helped me to be aware of the different perceptions of teachers within a mainstream primary school who were supporting learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties whilst also teaching their peers who were perceived as having no special educational needs.

*I was the teacher in charge of a behaviour support unit working with children who had been temporarily excluded from mainstream primary education due to inappropriate and challenging behaviour in the classroom. This was one of the days when I would begin the reintegration process for two children who were almost ready to go back to their classrooms. I, and the support team, had been working with the children to help them develop their social, emotional and behavioural skills. We had been using therapeutic and nurturing strategies for almost four weeks and we felt that they were ready to go back to their respective Year 3 and Year 5 classes for two hours each day for a week. By increasing the amount of time they spent in class, and with additional reflection time in the behaviour support unit, we felt that the success of reintegration would be increased. I had not, however, thought about how their class teachers might respond. Each teacher had found it difficult to support the children in the months leading up to the exclusions and both had talked about how upsetting and tiring those months had been. This reached a climax when each child had lost control of their emotions and actions, with one throwing a chair at the teacher and his peers, and the other pushing his teacher against a wall and shouting insults at everyone around him. In the weeks that followed, my priority had been to support the progress of the children and although I had shared informal conversations with the teachers about the children, I had not asked them how they felt about their return. Their feelings became clear when I took the children back for the first reintegration session.*

*The first teacher welcomed the child back with what appeared to be gritted teeth and gave him a curt "Morning", and told him to sit down and reminded him that she didn't "want any fuss". The boy had been preparing an apology and a speech that included reassurances that he was going to try hard to behave appropriately; he was not given the opportunity to say this. The teacher then turned to me and said in a voice loud enough for the whole class to hear, that she did not really want him in her class anymore but that she knew she had to have him back and that the minute he "puts a foot wrong, you can come and take him back to the unit".*

*The second teacher welcomed her pupil back with a wide smile and asked him how he was and told him she was glad to have him back in class. She gave him the opportunity to apologise and make his reassurances that he was going to try hard to improve his behaviour and she assured him that she would try hard to help him do this. She then explained what he and his peers would be doing during the session and asked him to sit near her so that they could work together.*

*As I walked back to the unit, I thought about the two different reactions from teachers who had experienced similar challenges and wondered why their responses were so different. I also knew at that point that I should have done more to listen to them and help the teachers to prepare for the return of the children to the classroom.*

Looking back on that event, both teachers had experiences to share. I realised, in retrospect, that I could have asked them about the lead up to the exclusions, how they felt about the impact the children had on their teaching, and how they felt about them returning to their classrooms. The event affected how I saw my role and how I responded to the many teachers I worked with in the subsequent years. Up to that day I had never been aware of teachers' different responses to the challenges they faced when supporting children identified as having SEBD, even though I was a part of that system and world. The realisation that they may have feelings towards the children which were very different to my own was a shock to me. I began to try and anticipate the teachers' responses when taking a child back to their class after time out so that I could prepare all those involved. It now feels increasingly clear to me that if I had listened more to the teachers, perhaps I could have been more effective in the way that I did my job.

This was the very beginning of this research study. These events led me to reflect on what might be learned from listening more closely to teachers. I felt that such stories could help me to develop a better understanding of how they felt. I was also beginning to appreciate that their experiences might impact on their role as mainstream class teachers supporting children identified as having SEBD. This was important at the time because as the manager for behaviour support in the school, I needed to develop and improve the quality of provision for those children identified as having SEBD. The two teachers' emotional responses to the children were different and I had begun to realise that their responses and feelings about what they did were having an impact on the way they supported the children. My role was to implement policy and guidance issued by the Department for Education through direction and leadership. The teachers responded by demonstrating how they felt about what they were expected to do through their feelings about the children and their roles. This

highlighted to me that there was a link between their emotional responses and the expectations on them when negotiating policy and practice.

### **1.3 Background information**

The focus of this study is primary education classrooms and how practice within them is driven by policy. The Department for Education has introduced many documents which have provided legislation and guidance to teachers to ensure that their practice meets expectations. These range from curricular expectations that are issued in the form of national curriculum documents, National Strategies, and associated reviews, updates and developments. Legislation for state education in the form of several Education Acts including those in 1980, 1981, 1988, 1994, 1996, 2002, 2005 and 2011 (HM Government) and guidance on behaviour management in schools (DfES, 2005b, DCSF, 2009a, CESC, 2010, DfE, 2011a and DfE, 2016a) add to the list of government documents pertinent to schools. The multiple policy developments place demands on how teachers carry out their roles. In addition to this, increased measures in terms of accountability and checks on teachers' performance have been put in place. These have caused teachers to feel pressure and confusion in relation to what they should be doing whilst knowing they will be inspected and judged on their performance (Ball, 2003). Studies of teacher's lives have suggested that such pressures have often led to fear and insecurity (Nias, 1989; Day and Kington, 2008).

Surveys of teachers have suggested that these pressures intensify when supporting learners identified as having SEBD. Research into the perspectives of teachers acknowledges that they are often overwhelmed with the challenges of supporting learners who exhibit disruptive behaviour (Ballet and Kelchtermans, 2008; Scanlon and Barnes-Holmes, 2013; Talmor, Reiters and Feigin, 2005). The National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, a teacher's trade union in the UK, carried out a survey of its members (NASUWT, 2014) and their figures showed that forty-two percent of teachers reported that there were behaviour problems in their schools that had

impacted upon their teaching. The survey does not adequately define what is meant by 'behaviour problems' and I acknowledge that teachers may indeed have their own different interpretations of what such 'problems' may look like. However, the responses do indicate that almost half of the teachers who responded to the survey felt that their roles were made more difficult due to certain behaviours being exhibited in their classrooms.

Bookshops and websites are plentiful in their guidance for teachers. Indeed, a search for 'behaviour in the classroom' on a popular book supply website identifies over 700 texts, the majority of which attempt to tell teachers how to control behaviour (or the children) in the classroom (Roffey, 2011; Rogers, 2009). There is also a wide range of advice offered through training courses and social media, e.g. *Jogo Behaviour Support* which provides advice on "training, strategies and interventions" (Jogo, 2016). However, upon closer scrutiny of the NASUWT survey responses (NASUWT, 2014), it seems that the main concern for the teachers is not how to cope with the behaviour per se, but that this disruption affects teaching and the attainment of all children in the class. It seems that teachers are worried about how challenging and distracting behaviours in the classroom impact on the learning. The DfE produces explicit expectations, through the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013), that children need to meet age-related learning objectives. Progress and performance of children may be affected due to interrupted learning because of these disruptive behaviours.

Pressures and expectations upon teachers supporting learners identified with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may also be compounded by the way in which SEND and SEBD are portrayed in theory and policy. The government has issued *Codes of Practice* (DfEE, 1994; DfES, 2001; DfE and DoH, 2015) to schools. These include statutory expectations and guidance for teachers and other professionals when working with children and young people who are identified with SEN and disabilities. The Codes have been influenced and shaped by the different perceptions and discourses associated with different models of disability (Oliver, 2013). However, these models of disability are shaped by ideologies which underpin the way in which those who are

considered to be 'different' are perceived within society.<sup>2</sup> Individuals may be considered to be disabled due to their medical conditions or due to the way in which the people and resources around them dis-able them. This leads to a culture which is divisive and which identifies 'those that can' as being different from 'those that can't' (Oliver and Barnes, 2012).

The *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) outlines statutory expectations that all teachers will provide inclusive education for children in their classrooms; it also details expectations for pupil progress in each of the specific subject areas – meeting the expectations of both, at the same time, is challenging for teachers (Burton, Bartlett and de Cuevas, 2009). Mowat (2015) argued that teachers find the concept and practice of 'inclusion' difficult to understand and implement. Clough and Lindsey (1991) and Goodman and Burton (2010) argued that children identified with behavioural difficulties were often the most difficult include in mainstream classroom teaching. In light of the recognition that children exhibiting disruptive behaviour in the classroom may impact on the successful learning of their peers (DfE, 2016c), head teachers were given greater exclusionary options. As a result, the numbers of children excluded from primary and secondary schools due to disruptive behaviour has increased by over 300% in some parts of England (DfE, 2016b). Macleod (2006) and Wright (2009) described their concerns that some teachers seemed to adopt a punitive approach in their interactions with children who exhibited disruptive or disturbing behaviours. They concluded that holding a deficit view of such children (as described in the medical and social models of disability) was not helpful.

Teachers face contradictory and confusing guidance and policy. Inclusion, exclusion, medical and social models of disability, heavy workloads, performance and progress in teaching and learning, and a breadth of needs and abilities in the mainstream classroom are taking their toll on teachers (Burton, Bartlett and de Cuevas, 2009). Oliver and Barnes (2012) and Peters, Johnstone and Ferguson (2005) suggest that an alternate model of disability –

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<sup>2</sup> Each of the models of disability are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2

the disability rights-based model – may provide an alternate way of perceiving educational concepts and practices; these may provide greater clarity and less contradiction in what teachers do and could be transformational and emancipatory for teachers and children (Oliver, 2013).

#### **1.4 Relevance to my prior experiences**

As a qualified primary school teacher, who has worked in schools for fifteen years and then as a lecturer in primary teacher education in universities for the last nine years, I feel I have an 'insider's' perspective on teaching. I have a breadth of experience of supporting colleagues and teacher trainees who, like me, have devoted time, energy, skills and knowledge to children in schools. These experiences have contributed to my understanding of the role of teaching, and teaching children with social, emotional and behaviour difficulties in particular.

I had never set out to be a teacher who worked specifically with children who exhibited challenging behaviours. My training as a primary teacher with an interest in the early years had fulfilled me, professionally and personally, for the first ten years of my career. During this time, however, I had frequently offered to take older children in the school into my early years' classroom when they were finding it difficult to cope in their own classrooms. These children exhibited signs of distress or excessive emotional outbursts and their teachers sometimes found it difficult to continue teaching the rest of their class due to the disruption that was often caused by the children. It was common practice within the school for the child to be 'sent' to me so that they could calm down in a learning environment that was structured in less formal ways. They could take part in activities which they chose and they were less likely to disrupt the learning of others because the children already in the class were absorbed in their own self-directed learning tasks. It was also possible for me and my colleagues to talk to them because we had a higher adult-child ratio and so could be released from group teaching and focus on one-to-one provision. Therefore, someone could be available to listen to, and talk with, the children who were distressed.

Once the children had recovered from whatever had caused the outburst, they then returned to their classroom.

Colleagues in the senior management team began to identify that I had the skills required for supporting children identified as having SEBD and I was asked to take on the role as behaviour support manager in the school. They, and I, felt that there was a need for specialist provision in the school for some children. On some occasions, I had almost as many children from other classrooms in the early years' room as I did my own class, and so the decision was taken to create a behaviour support unit. This was a converted classroom on the school premises. Over the following two years, children identified as having SEBD from my school, and six other schools in the local area, were given part or full time support in this specialist unit. The aim was to provide a curriculum which focused on their social and emotional needs and to help them to be successfully reintegrated into their mainstream classes. My interest in the practices and strategies for supporting children who found it difficult to learn alongside their peers grew as my role changed and developed. Despite my early experiences of not understanding the breadth of teachers' views, as identified in my story at the beginning of this chapter, I did begin to develop some understanding of the challenges. I had many conversations with teachers about the difficulties and joys associated with teaching children who exhibited challenging behaviours. I listened to their concerns about a perceived mismatch between what teachers saw as their role, and the expectations imposed on them through policy. The needs of the children identified with SEBD seemed, for them, to be at odds with the requirements of policy and externally imposed guidance. This study is an attempt to probe more deeply into how teachers perceive this gap and to provide opportunities for teachers to tell their stories.

This research does not start from an objective standpoint. My early interests in research were prompted by a desire to share my views about the gap in policy and practice. I had been a primary school teacher who had become increasingly frustrated with the challenges of supporting children in a learning environment which seemed focused on test results and implementation of government guidance which I sometimes felt was inappropriate for those

children. My conversations with colleagues in school indicated to me that I was not the only one who felt frustrated by the gap between what I saw as 'doing my best' for the children and what I was told to do. After all, I argued, the government does not know the children like I do. I felt that by sharing my views, I might encourage other teachers to speak out and share their views too. This interest had, at its heart, an emancipatory focus (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Kincheloe, 2003). I felt my practice was constrained by policy that the children in my classes who exhibited challenging behaviours, were not being supported effectively. I wanted to talk with other teachers in other schools to find out what they felt and to find out if my views were shared by others. I felt that by doing so, greater insight into how teachers felt about what was happening in their mainstream primary classrooms would be achieved and that this understanding may impact on future practice.

This doctoral study has provided the opportunity to stand back, broaden the insights from my own experiences, and develop a critical understanding of wider perspectives on current practice (Ball, 2003; Macleod, 2006; Oliver and Barnes, 2012).

My position within the study needs to be recognised. Having my own perceptions within this field could be seen as either informative and beneficial or biased and narrow-minded. My prior knowledge and experiences provided greater insight into the practices and experiences of the teachers who took part in the study. I could relate to what they told me and respond in ways that encouraged more in-depth conversations (Hogan, 1988; Roulston, 2010). The drawbacks, however, were that I had come to the study with existing opinions and views that could overshadow what the teachers said and that any bias would lead to an inaccurate portrayal of their views (Smythe and Murray, 2000). Throughout, I have therefore attempted to be reflexive about how my experiences have shaped the process of collecting and analysing data (Door and Menter, 2014). Acknowledging this, I have used the insights and frameworks of scholars working from diverse perspectives (Ball, 2003, 2013; MacLure, 2003; Macleod, 2006) to gain alternative interpretations.



As explored later, the study draws heavily on teachers' stories of their experiences. The use of storytelling by teachers when sharing their experiences and classroom events was identified part way through the research design. As explored in Chapter 4, the methodology and methods of data collection and analysis were adapted to reflect this.

## **1.5 Aim and approaches**

The aim of the study was to investigate the views and feelings of the mainstream primary school teachers who support children identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). I wanted to find out the perceptions of teachers teaching in the context outlined above.

To develop a greater awareness of the views and feelings of the teachers, the following research sub-questions were formulated:

1. How do expectations in relation to policy and curriculum impact on teachers' feelings about what they do?
2. What is it like to support learners who are identified as having SEBD?
3. How do the additional needs of children identified as having SEBD impact on the teachers' feelings and experiences?
4. How do the experiences of supporting children identified as having SEBD in mainstream classrooms influence how teachers feel about the expectations placed upon them?
5. How do these experiences influence how teachers feel about what they do, professionally and/or personally?

The research design evolved throughout the early stages of the study. I identified that the context of the mainstream primary classroom was a specific environment that could be observed, experienced and interpreted. I had intended to present a collection of individual studies which highlighted teachers' perceptions about what it was like for them in mainstream classrooms. As the study developed it became clear that this was not going to be appropriate

because I wanted to look at the ways their stories related. I felt this would give me an impression of how complex their views were. A pilot study in one school provided data that demonstrated that storytelling was a key component of the conversations teachers were sharing. The teachers seemed to be keen to talk in depth about the events that had occurred in the classroom and to explain why these events had led to how they felt. Our conversations were filled with their stories and their take on the events described, and the detail within them seemed much richer as a result. Therefore, the approach was refined to focus particularly on narrative. In light of this, all subsequent meetings with teachers were designed to promote and encourage storytelling. This then influenced and shaped the analysis of the transcripts.

I used a combination of thematic and narrative analyses to identify themes that were pertinent to the existing debate in education as highlighted in the literature review. This provided a series of themes that arose from a combination of deductive and inductive analysis. I also reflected across the narratives to consider how each teacher portrayed themselves. Therefore, a synthesis of these approaches was developed, which provided thematic and personal accounts.

## **1.6 Justification and limitations**

This study is important because it reflects on a growing gap between expectation and practice. In Chapter 3 I reflect on literature pertaining to analysis of the policies that impact on practice in schools (Ball, 2003, 2013; Goodson, 2014) as well as the policies that must be implemented in schools. Ball and Olmedo's (2013) discussion of teacher's experiences and responses to the challenges they face in response to the changes in policy as a result of a neoliberal influenced agenda is also considered. This neoliberal agenda, which incorporates the necessity for "marketisation and diversification of educational delivery" (Wilkins, 2015, p1144) has had ramifications for policy and practice during the last four decades. The prioritization of academic outcomes and performance of children has led to teachers questioning the purpose of their

role (Wilkins, 2015). There is recognition of the gap between teaching as a public service and moral responsibility (Ball, 2013) and as a market driven and consumerist provision characterised by party political rhetoric and global competition. It is, according to O'Connor (2008), having an impact on teachers' professional identity and the extent to which they feel they have ownership over what they do. This discontent has led to an outcry with teachers demonstrating their unhappiness by leaving the profession. The DfE's workload survey (2010b) identified that many teachers were unsatisfied in their work. They felt that the pressures and stresses they experienced were related to a heavy workload. Part of this workload was due to bureaucratic tasks related to the requirements emanating from the neoliberal influenced policies (Ball, 2013). Teachers were increasingly required to measure pupil outcomes through rigorous testing in order to demonstrate performance within the competitive education market. Another workload survey carried out four years later by the National Union of Teachers (NUT, 2014) showed that these concerns had worsened. Despite the surveys' results, and despite assertions by the DfE that improvements would be made, changes which did not address the issues continued to be implemented. New and reviewed policies, which appear to add to the pressures teachers say they face, are introduced on a regular basis. They appear to continue to promote the need for schools to demonstrate their effectiveness in an education system which is focused on "marketisation ... fiscal efficiency ... 'consumer choice' ... [and] data-driven performance management at every level" (Wilkins, 2015, p1145).

This study reflects on the views and feelings of teachers who are working within this education system. It considers what teachers say about their role and the challenges they say they face when negotiating policies whilst teaching children who bring different challenges to the classroom associated with what are described as social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

There are limitations to this study. This study reflects on the views of a small number of teachers working in classrooms with children aged between six and eleven years, some of whom are identified by their teachers as having SEBD. It is not possible to generalise from their experiences and views and apply them

to the broader profession; they have a range of views and emotions about what they do and their stories are varied. It is possible however, to draw on these lived experiences (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) to highlight the emotional dimensions of teaching and explore how professional identity is related to the wider picture of expectation and change.

## **1.7 Contribution to knowledge**

This study has developed a greater understanding and depth into the perceptions of teachers who are teaching children identified as having SEBD in mainstream primary schools. It provides greater detail of how the already existing pressures of working within a performative regime are impacting on the teaching practices in the classroom. I have synthesised concepts relating to performative culture within teaching and learning, teacher identity, ideology of Special Educational Needs and Disability and disability rights and used these in my analysis of teachers' stories and views. This has enabled me to demonstrate how high levels of stress and frustration are forcing teachers to position children according to their additional needs, and argue that this process ultimately leads to a return to more exclusionary approaches.

These contributions can be summarised as:

- Giving space to teachers' views about their perspectives of what it is like to teach children identified with SEBD in mainstream primary schools.
- Understanding of the impact of the performative culture on teachers' experiences of teaching SEBD.
- Understanding of how teachers are constrained and frustrated by the challenges of implementing inclusive teaching approaches for children identified as having SEBD.
- Consideration of a rights-based model to emancipate teachers from the constraints of contradictory teaching expectations and approaches when working with children who exhibit disruptive, disturbing or challenging behaviours.

## 1.8 Outline of the thesis

In this introduction, I have:

- explored my personal reasons for engaging in this particular study;
- outlined the educational policy context within which this study is based;  
and
- identified the research questions and briefly outlined my methodology.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the literature pertaining to the study. Chapter 2 considers the way in which special educational needs and social and emotional behavioural difficulties are perceived in society, schools and in legislation and guidance. It considers a series of models which reflect different ways of conceptualising disability, and explores how these are interpreted in practice in the education system. It also identifies the expectations and structures of the English education system as defined in policy and curriculum. Chapter 3 focuses on the literature regarding emotional labour and teachers' professional identity. Drawing on Ball's work, it identifies how performativity can impact on teachers' identity and how changing expectations and ideologies in the current education system can impact on teachers' perspectives and purposes.

Chapter 4 outlines the first part of the journey I took to define and shape the methodological approach to this study. It describes how the initial proposal for a phenomenological study was developed and fine-tuned to incorporate the narratives the participants shared. Chapter 5 then describes the methods used for the data collection, analysis and ethical considerations of the study.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 present the findings of the study. Three main themes are explored: how teachers position and frame children through discourses of SEBD, the pressures they experience, and the way they, and those they work with, are expected to comply with externally imposed expectations in their work.

In Chapter 9, these themes are discussed in relation to performativity (Ball, 2003, 2013), identity (Kelchtermans, 2009) and models of disability (Oliver and

Barnes, 2012). I argue that the pressures, stresses and dilemmas teachers say they experience could be addressed through a renewed way of viewing disability. I suggest that a rights-based model of disability could improve the experiences for teachers and children in schools within the field of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Conclusions and implications for future practice and research is outlined in Chapter 10.

## **Chapter 2: Special Educational Needs, policy and curriculum discourses**

### **2.1 Introduction**

#### ***Note on disability language usage***

*Different models of disability employ different terms to describe impairments and the impact these have on individuals' lives and entitlements. Special Educational Need, for example, although a term widely used in schools is rarely used in discourses around the Social or Rights Model of Disability. In this chapter I use a variety of terms to reflect the complexity of this usage as I describe the different discourses relevant to the study.*

This chapter explores the literature pertaining to discourses and policies relevant to this study. Firstly, it reflects on the way in which children identified with special educational needs (SEN) are labelled and categorised in primary schools. I acknowledge the use of labels within this thesis and explain my position in relation to how I have used them. Secondly, I consider the way in which policy has influenced SEN provision in primary schools. I reflect on how recent government ideologies and approaches have shaped the aims identified within primary education with a particular focus on how the psycho-medical/individual and social models have helped shape policy in different ways. The third section reflects on how social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) have been conceptualised. I also review the policy and discourses relevant to this specific area of SEN. The final section provides an overview of the primary curriculum and the way in which different curricula for teaching children identified with SEBD have been perceived by educationalists and researchers such as Alexander (2008), Clough (2005) and Noddings (2002).

### **2.2 Terminology and the use of labels to describe children**

Throughout this thesis, the use of labels to categorise children is widespread. Labels such as 'SEN' and 'SEBD' are used widely in the research and educational literature reviewed for this study. It is important for me to recognise this at the outset of this thesis and to acknowledge the purpose and implications that the use of such labels can have.

Norwich (1999) and Hodge (2005) considered the implications of labelling children who have been identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN). They reflected on the way in which such labels can demonstrate the perception that children thus labelled are different to others in the classroom and society. This may have implications for both the person who has been given the label and for those interacting with them.

It is clear that the perceptions, judgements and expectations of people with difficulties and disabilities can be influenced by labels, which may be used in ways that stigmatise and devalue (Norwich, 1999, p 179).

However, Lauchlan and Boyle (2007) countered this view and argued that the use of labels can provide a recognisable diagnosis which can result in support and access to resources needed for that person. They also argued that "labelling leads to awareness raising and promotes understanding of particular difficulties" (p37). It is reasonable to acknowledge that labels can be helpful in a discussion between those who are familiar with the diagnoses behind the label (such as a dialogue between two professionals responsible for caring for, and teaching, a child). However, Hodge warned that "the label becomes more significant than the nature of the child" (2005, p345) and that there is the potential for the individuality of that child to be lost as the label is seen as having greater status, e.g. the child becomes 'the special needs child' or 'the SEBD pupil'. Potts (1998) also recognised that such labels can enable those using them to distance themselves from those being given them. She argued that the label, whilst seeming to describe those considered to have such difficulties, also "functions to confirm a polarised, 'not like us' value judgement" (p19). She argued that this could impact on the regard held for certain individuals and the way in which this can then develop and shape a broader societal view. This, in turn, may then influence future ideological and policy



decisions: 'they' are different, 'they' are not like us, and therefore we should treat 'them' in a certain way.

The use of labels by members of society, and in particular teachers, may also have an impact on expectations of those who are labelled. Armstrong (2014) argued that the label of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties could lead to either positive or negative assumptions about the child before a teacher has even met them; this could affect the way they regard the child when teaching them. Macleod and Munn (2004) recognised the flaws of such labelling; stating that the term SEBD is subjective and relative to external factors. These factors could include the teacher's previous experiences of relationships with children given the same label. Therefore, a teacher who supports children who demonstrate severely challenging behaviour may consider low level disruption in the classroom as a minor concern. Alternatively, a teacher who has not taught children identified as having the label SEBD in the past, may find low level disruption to be a major issue. It is also possible that teachers could develop assumptions that particular behaviours are typical of certain labels and so come to expect similar experiences with another child with the same label, whether that is appropriate or not.

### **2.2.1 Acknowledging the use of labelling and terminology within this study**

The use of 'SEBD' throughout this study is at odds with the recognition that the label SEBD can be considered misleading, narrow, subjective and unhelpful (Hodge and Runswick-Cole, 2008). It is a term, however, that is commonly used amongst professionals and has been used in policy and educational discourse for almost half a century. Teachers in England are required, by the Department for Education, to 'categorise' children into various 'aspects of disability' in the annual Special Educational Needs and Disability school census. Teachers are not only familiar with the labels and terminology; they are expected to use them. These descriptions, used within the umbrella term SEBD, are highly relevant to this study and the comments shared by teachers reflect this in subsequent

chapters. Therefore, a deliberate choice has been made to use these common and recognised labels as a form of shared language between myself and the teachers who participated within this study. Although the rights-based model, which I discuss later in the study, makes clear the implications this can have on research practice, given the aim of this study is to look at how teachers perceive and construct their work, I felt it necessary to use them. Therefore, each time the terms 'SEN' and 'SEBD' are used in this study, it is acknowledged that they are used to reflect the contextualised use of the terms within schools rather than a way of categorising, dehumanising or stigmatising individuals. I remain mindful of the suggestion by Potts (1998) in her research where she identified the challenges of using labels, "there is a tension between an epistemological need to tighten up definitions and an ethical need to loosen them" (p27). Throughout this study, I strive to demonstrate clarity in my descriptions yet recognise the ethical and ideological implications this may have for my way of thinking and interpretations. I also return to these ideas in Chapter 10 when I reflect on how this study has impacted upon my thoughts about the use of these terms.

### **2.3 Interpretations of Special Educational Needs**

In England, *The Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of Special Educational Needs* (DfEE, 1994) and *The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* (DfES 2001, DfE and DoH, 2015) have both used the category of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Prior to this, the term "severe or emotional behavioural disorders" (Warnock, 1978, p96) was used. The Codes worked from the assumption that pupils who are placed within a range of categories require additional support to ensure that they can access teaching and learning in schools and specialist settings successfully.

The policy documentation, such as the Codes of Practice, is also influenced by debates surrounding models of disability. Different perceptions and discourses associated with different models of disability surround the way in which disability is referred to and responded to. Therefore, professionals implementing the

documentation, such as classroom teachers, will be influenced by the discourses dominant within the policies. The implications for how different models of disability have shaped the documentation are discussed in detail in the next section.

### **2.3.1 The psycho-medical/individual model**

The inclusion of SEBD within the SEN framework has been the subject of ongoing debate, arising in part from two differing perspectives associated with different models of disability: the psycho-medical/individual and social models. The Individual Medical Deficit model (Hjörne and Sälljö, 2012), also referred to as the individual model (Oliver, 2013) or the psycho-medical model (Skidmore, 1996), assumes that children's 'problems' in terms of learning in the classroom stem from their own disabilities or deficits. From this perspective, addressing any issues which the child may present in the learning environment, involves 'changing' the child, thereby addressing the perceived deficit: this, it is believed, will result in the situation being improved. As such, the psycho-medical/individual model paradigm promotes the requirement for children to be identified with difficulties, to be assessed, and then diagnosed and/or categorised, so that teachers can respond accordingly. This leads to the implication that if something is 'wrong' with a child then it can be diagnosed and treated or cured. This model of special educational needs has been sustained in the English education system over the last fifty years and remains influential today for many teachers and policymakers (Hodkinson, 2016), despite legislation and policy directives to make changes. Amendments to guidance on policy, in the 1980s and onwards, recognised that the medical model could be perceived as accusative and offensive to those it is designed to support.

Critique of the individual/medical model focuses on the portrayal of individuals as having deficits which make them different from others within society (Oliver

and Barnes, 2012). Shakespeare (1996), a researcher of disability studies and cultural and identity politics, argued that,

Medical approaches consider negative self-identity to be an outcome of physical impairment, and focus on the need for adjustment, mourning and coming to terms with loss” (p97).

This view, one which considers the implications a medical model may have on how individuals see themselves, personally and within society, suggests that having a disability is negative, catastrophic and deserving of pity. Llewellyn and Hogan (2000), referring to models of disability in general, and the medical model specifically, felt that models should be recognised for what they are – ideological interpretations of a group of people perceived to face difficulties as a result of their diagnoses. They stated that “we should remember that models themselves are not a representation of ‘real life’” (p163) and suggested that the medical model was flawed,

The medical model in itself is incomplete, and indeed, an examination of the limitations of this model led to the view that it is within society that a handicap becomes a disability. As a consequence of this line of thinking the social model of disability emerged” (Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000, p163).

This move towards addressing the inadequacies of a deficit-based medical model by establishing a social model is discussed in the next section.

### **2.3.2 The social model**

In contrast to the psycho-medical/individual model, the social model assumes that it is unacceptable to consider those with additional needs in education or society as being to blame for accessibility issues (Oliver, 2013). This model assumes that any lack of ability should be attributed to society (Hodkinson, 2016), rather than being seen as arising from individual attributes. From this perspective, it is deficits within environments and perceptions that prevent the individuals’ needs being met and it is the lack of responsiveness or support that disables an individual’s ability to access society (Anastasiou and Kauffman,

2012). This model has informed changes in expectations for professionals with the intention of shaping and developing a more inclusive society. For example, legislation was introduced to the UK in 1995 in the form of the *Disability Discrimination Act* (HM Gov, 1995). This required all employers and providers to the public, including schools, to ensure that their practice and environments were accessible to all. Within education, versions of, and guidance for, the *National Curriculum* (DfES, 1999; DfES, 2004a) have required schools to ensure that education provision was inclusive for all children. The key elements to be incorporated were; accessibility within the school, additional support for those children recognised as needing it, and differentiated planning so that learning for all levels of understanding was provided. These changes were recognised as being more inclusive for those who had previously been regarded as in need of medicalisation and normalising. The changes were considered to be an important development in provision by the government and advocates for the disabled (Morgan, 2012). People identified as having disabilities were no longer regarded as the problem and society was charged to make adjustments. However, despite this intention, the reality was different. Oliver (2013) in his review of his own work on disability published thirty years earlier, recognised that the change in emphasis from the psycho-medical or individual deficit model to the social model was a complex and difficult process. He recognised that the social model did not address all the barriers faced by disabled people. He also acknowledged that recommendations for a social model were influenced by the assumption that there were two types of individuals – those who were ‘normal’ and those who were ‘different’ as a result of their physical, sensory, cognitive, social or emotional abilities. He accepted that a move from one model to another might suggest to those reading his works that it was possible to choose from one or the other and sought to address any misunderstandings his readers had and identified that overlaps were inevitable,

The first of these [criticisms] suggests that there is no place for impairment within the social model of disability. The second alleges that the social model fails to take account of difference and presents disabled people as one unitary group (Oliver, 2013, p1025).

Owens (2015) argued that the definition of disability within the UK is in itself problematic and that there needs to be greater appreciation of the differences in different types of disability. In his references to physical disabilities and learning difficulties, he asserted that experiences of individuals described as disabled may be different and that the singular description of 'disabled' was inadequate. He felt that understanding and discourse relating to disability needed to acknowledge this,

Currently, no mechanism has been offered in the social model of disability that accounts for the variety of ways disability may be experienced ... people with learning difficulties may be excluded from a social model analysis because adjusting the social environment is not always possible, leaving personal and social differences unacknowledged and undifferentiated (Owens, 2015, p388-389).

Goodley (2001) also described the limitations of the social model in relation to how disabled individuals' needs are perceived within society. The way he positioned the aspect of learning difficulties, identified by Owens (2015), that disability deficits were broader and more comprehensive than the social model may indicate that,

... as part of a *social* model of disability, there is a need to work with, and for an understanding of, 'learning difficulties' as a fundamentally social, cultural, political, historical, discursive and relational phenomenon, rather than sensitively recognising the existence of an individual's 'naturalised impairment' (Goodley, 2001, p210).

It could be argued that this perception of learning difficulties adds another dimension to aspects of what are perceived as disability deficits and how this can be viewed in relation to the social model. Hodkinson's description (2016) of the social model as something for which society is charged with the responsibility for en-abling the disabled, is therefore, too simplistic a view. Goodley (2001) argues that specific difficulties faced by some individuals are conceptualised and categorised by those who, in an environment shaped by the social model, are supposed to be enhancing inclusive experiences. Therefore, disabled individuals are not only trying to overcome the challenges brought

about by their environment, but also those brought about by the way in which they are perceived culturally, historically, politically and discursively.

Society creates disablement and is the arbiter of disciplinary powers that (re)produce pathological understandings of different bodies and minds (Goodley, 2001, p210).

An inclusive approach in education, designed to support learners to access the curriculum, continues to underpin policy decisions. The Education Act (HM Gov, 1996) expressed expectations that “the child is educated in a school which is not a special school unless that is incompatible with the wishes of his parent” and that the schools are responsible for ensuring their provision meets the needs of the child (HM Gov, 1996, section 316, p179). This statutory guidance assimilates with the principles identified in the social model of disability. The onus was on teachers to ensure their practice promoted inclusion for all, and that by using the social model to shape their practice, children would be ‘enabled’ rather than ‘dis-abled’ by the people and resources surrounding them (Oliver, 1990). The intention was that each child would experience equality with their peers in terms of having greater opportunities to succeed (DfES, 2004a). Despite the rhetoric, however, Swain and French (2000) and Oliver (2013) noted that the perceptions of many individuals did not change, and that the needs of those categorised as being disabled were still not adequately addressed. Teachers reported that effective inclusion was very difficult to achieve and the breadth of individual needs could not be satisfactorily met due to insufficient time, knowledge, resources and opportunity (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Mowat (2015) carried out research into the tensions that arise as a result of trying to provide inclusive experiences for pupils identified as having social and emotional difficulties in Scottish schools. She identified that teachers were presented with dilemmas about what the best approaches for learners should be. There was a mismatch between the teachers’ perceptions of need and the best inclusive strategy, and the learners’ perceptions of what they needed. Moreover, Oliver (2013) argued that a shift of emphasis from the individual to society, resulting from the shift from a medical to a social model, resulted in a negation of the issues, challenges and feelings that arose from a disability. He argued that there needed to be some kind of middle ground, a

broader ideology that encompassed the individuals' rights, feelings and needs as well as a responsive and supportive society. However, regardless of the underpinning ideology, Skidmore (1996) argued that any model would inevitably lead to inadequate and simplified responses to complex individualised needs. Lave and Gardner (1993) also shared their concerns regarding the simplicity of the characterisation of the social model of education,

A simplified picture of a part of the real world. It has some of the characteristics of the real world but not all of them. It is a set of interrelated guesses about the world. Like all pictures a model is simpler than the phenomena it is supposed to represent or explain. (Lave and Gardner, 1993, p3).

By trying to describe and define an approach to meet the needs of a broad and diverse society, it is necessary to resort to socially constructed interpretations of the environment and the people within it (Oliver, 1990). The discourse used in policy promotes the assumptions that there are those that 'can' and those that 'can't'. The use of the term 'special educational needs' encourages distinction between individuals in schools, and society in general, because it perpetuates the view that those identified with 'needs' must be different from those that are not labelled as having 'special educational needs' (Runswick-Cole and Hodge, 2009). Oliver and Barnes (2012) also support the view that documentation and legislation issued to schools for the provision of disabled children, such as the *SEN Code of Practice* (DfE and DoH, 2015) is maintaining the difference in views, beliefs and practice within society. This social construction of difference perpetuates the view that polarises individuals and promotes a collective view rather than an individualised one: 'them' and 'us'.

By producing educationally and socially disabled individuals, the special education system also instils in non-disabled children and adults the notion that people with special needs are somehow inadequate and unable to participate and contribute to familial or community life. In doing so, it legitimises and perpetuates exclusionary policies and practices in all other areas of life. (Oliver and Barnes, 2012, p138).

Therefore, schools are left with policies which are promoted by the Department for Education as being inclusive, but which, arguably, promote exclusion.



Teachers are faced with the challenges of trying to provide inclusive practice whilst following guidance and legislation which identifies difference and disability. I now consider an alternative model which focuses on the attempts to draw together the social model and aspects of an individual's disability rights – the affirmative model.

### **2.3.3 The affirmative model**

Swain and French (2000) proposed an alternative - the affirmative model - and Cameron and Tossell (2012) identified that this model would provide an effective framework by which to perceive disability. Swain and French (2000) acknowledged the contradictions and issues arising from the psycho-medical/individual and social models as discussed above. The psycho-medical/individual model promotes a personal-tragedy view whereby the disabled are defined by their deficits. This perception can engender responses such as pity from the 'abled'. The social model, on the other hand, attributes failings within society as being dis-abling for some people. In this instance, the abled response can be irritation, blame or anger that they are being held responsible for changing the environment (resources or attitudes). Therefore, Swain and French (2000) argued, the affirmative model builds,

... on the social model, through which disabled people can envisage full participative citizenship and equal rights. Disabled people not only look towards a society without structural, environmental or attitudinal barriers, but also a society which celebrates difference and values people (p580).

This model has been regarded as having the potential to transform the attitudes and practices within society (Cameron and Tossell, 2014). It places the views, experiences, and choices of disabled people at the forefront of the disability debate.

However, Oliver (2013) argued that transformations in social attitudes and practices are problematic. His review of government documentation such as the *SEN Code of Practice* (DfES, 2001) and recent political developments on

disability, such as *The Equality Act* (HM Gov, 2010), identified that "disabled people are at the mercy of an ideologically driven government" (Oliver, 2013, p1026). He claimed that any move towards affirmative and social model based agendas are thwarted before they can have any impact. The education system is structured in such a way that categorisation and labelling of individuals is inevitable because policy and practice is centred around the principle that 'SEN' is something that is *done to* children. Regardless of the preferences of disabled children in schools, policy and embedded practices in schools categorise children so that their teachers can implement strategies and interventions. The *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice* (DfE and DoH, 2015) states that schools must "ensure that children and young people with SEN engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEN" (6.2, p92): this perpetuates difference. Oliver and Barnes (2012) argued that the move away from the attitude that disabled people are 'un-able' is necessary and that without changes to these views, beliefs, policy and actions are going to be unsuccessful. Fraser (2003) stated that an affirmative model would not provide the transformation needed in society and Browne and Millar (2016) also confirmed that an approach which was transformational would need to "deconstruct currently institutionalised patterns of cultural value and destabilise existing status differentiations" (p1074). They recognised that each of the three models mentioned above relied on the perceptions that there were inequalities amongst individuals, and that whilst the people were categorised (abled/disabled) societal practices and cultures would remain. McDonnell (2003) identified two different levels of organisation within society: "deep structures of theories, values, assumptions and beliefs, and surface structures of day-to-day practices" (p261). Oliver and Barnes' (2013) proposal to address both the surface and deep levels of inequality, exclusion and normalisation in society, is to implement the disability rights-based model.

#### **2.3.4 The disability rights-based model**

In this section I reflect on the literature pertaining to the rights-based model of disability. I consider the views and descriptions of how the model could be a

solution to the challenges and criticisms described above.

The fundamental principle that every individual within society is entitled to certain rights was first recognised by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1946 (Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, OHCHR, 2016). It defines “the human rights of persons with disabilities” (OHCHR, 2016) as one of the issues it addresses. The Commission aims to work with nations to address the way legislation and human rights are integrated and implemented. Visser and Stokes (2003) reflected on the difference between three different kinds of rights and explained how a rights-based model of disability centres around the civil rights of individuals,

There are different kinds of rights – legal rights, civil rights and human rights. Legal rights are laid down in Acts of Parliament or by the common law ... civil rights are usually found in a nation’s Constitution ... human rights ... lay down a code by which all humans should be treated ... yet, human, civil and legal rights often coincide” (p67).

The recognition that the three kinds of rights are interlinked, and that one may lead to the implementation of the others is important in this review of a rights-based model for disability. Visser and Stokes (2003) recognised that “legislation on its own will not transform the English education system into a fully inclusive system” (p72). However, they do argue that legal rights, in conjunction with campaigns for civil and human rights by and for the disabled, have the potential to change the practice, culture and beliefs surrounding the inclusion of individuals within society. The Disability Rights Task Force (1999) stated that “law cannot force a change of attitude but can lay down a framework that will encourage and hasten a change in culture” (p2). Oliver (2013) asserted that without a comprehensive re-evaluation of the human, civil and legal rights that currently exist, change cannot occur and that a divisive and exclusionary culture will persist. A disability rights-based model, he argues, is the best way to address the embedded “traditional frameworks for conceptualising and analysing disability” (Oliver, 1986, p9). Browne and Millar (2016) stated that “a rights perspective exposes and draws critical attention to the social construction of disability” (p1067) and that this social construction is now firmly embedded in

practice to the extent that identifying deficits within individuals is now normalised practice. Baglieri, Valle, Connor and Gallagher (2011) recognised that ongoing debates on disability had not seemed to provide a solution to the criticisms of the previous models,

It seems that anything approaching consensus has, so far, eluded our grasp. More recently, in fact, it appears that achieving if not a consensus then perhaps a rapprochement or détente seems less, rather than more, likely. (2011, p268).

They argued that the debates over perspectives and models of disability had had little impact on the equality and inclusion of individuals in society, and so it was necessary to move away from discussion and to take a radical stance and re-conceptualise disability. Cameron and Tossell (2012) and Baglieri et al, (2011) referred to groups that have previously used civil rights as a basis for campaigning for equality. Such groups, such as feminists, gay people, transgender people and people with different ethnicities, have gained attention through campaigning, but “disability as a civil rights issue has received considerably less public attention” (Baglieri, et al, 2011, p268).

A disability rights-based model could address the conflict between the ‘entitlements’ and the ‘needs’ of the disabled. Albert (2004) argued that a rights-based model is “a way for disabled people to transform their sense of who they are – from stigmatised objects of care, to valued subjects of their own lives” (Albert, 2004, p4). A rights-based model could change disabled people’s own perceptions that they are ‘entitled’ to see themselves as independent individuals who have the right to be seen as equals who have the same opportunities to succeed as anyone else. The hitherto unsuccessful strategies to address the divisions between the ‘abled’ and the ‘dis-abled’ have failed because attitudes, practice and policy have not simultaneously addressed the complex issues of inclusive learning (Mckenzie and Macleod, 2012).

Anastasiou and Kauffman (2012) argued that,

If we really want a political strategy to achieve social inclusion of people with disabilities to the greatest extent feasible, then we cannot behave as ostriches, burying our heads in the sand and declining to deal with

difficult educational problems and complex dilemmas, pretending they do not exist. (Anastasiou and Kauffman, 2012, p144).

Oliver and Barnes (2012) stated that emancipating disabled people from their stigmatised positions would be a radical way of critiquing existing attitudes, practices and embedded divisive cultures. Emancipation, for individuals and society, would come about by legitimising the rights of disabled people.

Practice that accepts that children have the right to learn in mainstream schools in which they are entitled to support which enables them to reach their potential; are entitled to equality of opportunity; and have the right to voice their opinions and choices, would result in a seismic shift in ideology for all (Oliver, 1990).

Jones and Welch (2010) refer to the 'rights dynamic' when describing how concepts, laws and practices are developing in response to changing ways of viewing and understanding children's experiences. They describe how a "*rights dynamic* concerns the ways child rights can animate and create an impetus for change" (p16). They identify the need to review and refocus on how relationships between children and adults (such as parents, professionals, and more broadly, organisations) create the issues relating to children's rights rather than enabling the children to voice what they feel the issues are.

There are three aspects which merit further consideration regarding the move towards a rights-based model within the education system. Jones and Welch (2010) recognised that,

The idea and the practice of rights for children has emerged over recent years as a powerful force in children's lives. In many societies it is a catalyst for positive changes within ways adults and children live and work together (p3).

By reviewing why the current education system requires a new perspective at the present time, the language used within SEN documentation, and possible strategies for change, a greater understanding of how the rights-based model may impact on the education of children identified as having SEN and disabilities.

The first area focuses on the reasons why some researchers within the realm of

Disability Studies feel that engagement and implementation of this model should take place at the present time. Various authors including Oliver and Barnes (2012), Peters, Johnstone and Ferguson (2005) and Browne and Millar (2016) demonstrate that calls for a disability rights-based model have been made for many years. However, Oliver and Barnes (2012) in particular, have argued that this model is contextually and culturally appropriate for society, and in particular the education system in the UK at the present time. Economic influences on society have led to marketised practices in which wealth, and the attainment of wealth, is important. Cameron and Tossell (2012) described how a neoliberal ideology is fundamental to many policies and economically-driven practices; these shape the way individuals work and behave because they are expected to perpetuate that wealth. I discuss neoliberalism, its relationship to policies and practices, and the impact such policies and practices have on how individuals are regarded, later in this chapter. However, it is important to acknowledge here that not every member of society may be able to contribute to expectations to perpetuate wealth and this promotes inequality,

There is little room for doubt that the forces which sustain economic, political and social inequality within global capitalism have not been seriously challenged ... instead we all, and disabled people in particular, face a return to a world dominated by personal tragedy theory, philanthropy, charity and uncertainty of provision and outcome (Oliver and Barnes, 2012, p159).

The argument here is that if disabled people are not able to work, they will not be able to earn a wage, which in turn may lead to the need for economic support. In order to demonstrate the need for such support, proof of the inability to work is required and this is often demonstrated through “medicalisation of underperformance” (Conrad and Potter, 2000, p573). The attitudes and actions inherent in this process serve to perpetuate the “assertion that ‘able-bodied/mindedness’ is ‘normal’” (Oliver and Barnes, 2012) and that exclusion through labelling is acceptable. A rights-based model would promote a culture which positively impacts on every individual’s ability and opportunity to contribute to society through work and education (Peters, Johnstone and Ferguson, 2005).

The second area to consider is the language used to refer to special educational needs provision. Runswick-Cole and Hodge (2009) provided an “exploration on the use of language” because “language is able to create positive and negative images of children which, in turn, impact on the policy and practice of education” (p2). They reviewed the language used within the sphere of special educational needs provision. They argued that the term ‘educational needs’ promotes the belief that those identified as having such needs must have individual deficits, thereby confirming the focus of a medicalised model. Therefore, parents who seek to have their child’s ‘needs’ met are positioned within an education system which is caught up in a discourse where the deficit is the focus and where the outcomes are based on strategies which address these needs. Runswick-Cole and Hodge (2009) asserted that by changing the term ‘need’ to ‘right’ the discourse would be different. Rather than discussing ‘special needs’, “parents would find themselves campaigning for their children’s rights to be met at the Educational Rights and Disability Tribunal not at the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal” (p11). The focus of discussion and the way in which children are thought of, would change. This could then lead to new ways of conceptualising individuals within society, and as a result policy would have to change. So, for example, a discussion between the class teacher or SENCo and a parent or child about ‘needs’ might focus on support which would be put in place to the best of their abilities, whereas, the ‘right’ for support seems to indicate that it must be done. Runswick-Cole and Hodge (2009) describe how the ‘Special Educational Rights Code of Practice’ would look very different to its current manifestations as the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* (DfE and DoH, 2015), and so would practices within schools and society.

The third, and final, area to consider is the way the education of children identified with SEBD has been regarded in relation to a disability rights-based model. The Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989) adopted and ratified a list of articles to protect the rights of children around the world; 196 countries, have signed the treaty. Article 23.1 (UN, 1989) focuses on disability and states,

that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community (n.p.).

There are also sections within other articles that refer to inclusion and meeting children's developmental, academic, physical, social and emotional needs (see Articles 12, 17, 27, 28 and 29 (UN, 1989)). The Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE, 2000) claimed that the UK Government had breached the convention because they had produced legislation which allowed exclusion from school due to emotional needs, learning difficulties or disability (CSIE, 2000). Jones and Welch (2010) stated that,

In 2002, for example, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's concluding observations on the United Kingdom criticized the performance of the UK government in relation to ... inequalities in education and health ... for many years the UK government has *deliberately* retained an opt-out of the UNCRC (p69).

Visser and Stokes (2003) reflected on the way in which education systems support children identified as having SEBD and stated that "the inconsistencies in response by schools can lead to pupils with EBD not receiving their 'rights' because their behaviour is not seen as a special educational need" (p70). It would seem that not only is the provision for pupils considered to be disabled inconsistent, but that particular aspects of SEN, such as social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, are not consistently included in the umbrella term of SEND.

Browne and Millar (2016), building on the rights-based model, reflected on the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in schools and outlined a framework and associated strategies that they felt would transform inclusion in education for children identified with one aspect of SEND; though they suggested that adaptations to address complex individual contexts may be required for other disabilities such as SEBD. They described "seven components" (2016, p1068) which they felt were needed. These would: change the institutionalised and normalised discourse; recognise each individual as equal; reconsider the potential that each individual has within society; see each



individual as unique; review what it means to be inclusive in mainstream and specialist schools; enhance access to communities so that engagement with others takes place; and move away from the charity perspective to one of rights and justice. Each of these components points towards a re-evaluation of both practice and perceptions which Brown and Millar (2016) consider to be vital in changing culture and policy. They concluded, like Peters, Johnstone and Ferguson (2005), with a call for academics and practitioners to move away from debates about models of disability and for the implementation of a new way forward in equality and inclusive practice.

Jones and Welch (2010) identified, however, that there is a risk that even with a disability rights-based model in place, this may not be enough to ensure effective practice. They describe a “rights veneer” (p74) whereby the impression is given by policy makers and professionals that children seem to be given greater inclusion in decisions made about them,

... the emergence of a ‘rights veneer’ needs to be challenged by monitoring to ensure that participation is not qualified by those with power ... to result only in changes they feel are confluent within their own agenda (p74).

As a result, they identify four elements which they feel need to be addressed to ensure children are involved in decision making. These elements are: culture, structure, practice, and review. By considering ethos within organisations, planning and resourcing, ways of working and rigorous monitoring which demonstrates change, the likelihood of children’s rights being involved in decision making is greater.

In this section, I have reflected on the different models of disability that form the basis of much debate relating to education and inclusive practice. I have demonstrated how these models underpin how individuals in society think about, respond to, and act upon their perceptions of disability. I have also suggested that governmental policy and guidance reflects exclusionary practice and perpetuates the need to distinguish between people as being ‘normal’ or ‘abnormal’.

In the next section I explore how concerns about individualised deficit and social models of disability have played out specifically in relation to policy and provision for children identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and how research suggests that the challenges for teachers working with children identified with SEN and disabilities, as discussed above, may be even greater when those children are considered to exhibit challenging behaviours.

## **2.4 Contextualising social, emotional and behavioural difficulties**

This section provides an overview of how the description ‘social and emotional and behavioural difficulties’ (SEBD) has been used within education: what it is commonly used to refer to, how it is perceived, and how it can impact on provision in schools. Three aspects are considered: how SEBD is positioned within the broader debate about special educational needs (SEN); perspectives surrounding SEBD; and the way in which schools seem to perceive learners with SEBD.

### **2.4.1 Definitions and use of SEBD in governmental documentation**

The term social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) has been used in education policy and theoretical debate in various forms, such as emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) (HM Gov, 1989; DfEE, 1994; DCSF, 2009a; DfES, 2001). It may be reasonable to make links between the use of EBD and the earlier Department for Education guidance which seems to lean towards the medical model of disability. The later guidance seems to reflect the move towards a social model discourse with the use of SEBD and BESD. This variation in terminology also applies to its definition. Soles, Bloom, Heath and Karagiannakis argued that there is,

no standard definition of SEBD, the various definitions share commonalities such as the following: behaviour that goes to an extreme; behaviours or emotions that are outside societal norms; behaviours or emotions that negatively affect a child's educational functioning (2008, p276).

The Department for Education and Employment (1994) provided the following definition which reflects the medical model of disability,

emotional and behavioural difficulties range from social maladaptation to abnormal emotional stresses. They are persistent (if not necessarily permanent) and constitute learning difficulties. They may be multiple and may manifest themselves in many different forms and severities (DfEE, 1994, p7).

Yet, this statement still fails to define what it is that a teacher might look out for to identify and assess SEBD, hence the call by Visser for “the need for clarity in the use of terms to describe children exhibiting behaviour which is difficult for adults to control” (2007, p27).

Debates about how to approach, define and address SEBD within governmental documentation continue today. The introduction of the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice* (DfE and DoH, 2015) identified a shift in the expectations for mainstream schools to promote progress for all children identified as having SEN. It explicitly referred to an inclusive provision which is considered to be successful when it embraces teaching which is differentiated to meet the individual needs of the children. It recognised “social, emotional and mental health” (SEMH) (DfE and DoH, 2015, 5.32, p85) as one of the four areas of need and clarified that the “Department for Education publishes guidance on managing pupils’ mental health and behaviour difficulties in schools” (6.33, p98). This was the first time that a document released by the Department for Education explicitly referred to links between mental health and the challenging, disruptive or withdrawn behaviours that some children exhibit. The reference to mental health as an aspect for inclusion in the categorical definitions seems to point to a ‘problem’ which very much lies within the individual – thereby indicating a return to the medical model. Norwich and Eaton (2015) in their scrutiny of the SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH,

2015) argued that,

... the new category of SEMH is no different from the previous behavioural emotional and social difficulties (BESD) one in which its use is not clarified with a clear process for specifying the thresholds for identifying such difficulties. If there was a problem with the BESD category, then it was its ambiguity and diverse use, something that persists with the new Code. Removing the term 'behaviour' from the new category does not mean that challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour will not be taken into account in using the new term (p127).

Therefore, it appears that very little change can be found when comparing this aspect of the previous Code of Practice with the current one – other than in the terminology used.

In the next section the way SEBD is perceived by teachers is discussed.

#### **2.4.2 Perceptions of SEBD within SEN**

The debate surrounding ideologies of disability and special educational needs encompasses SEBD. As mentioned above, the category of SEBD is one of the aspects of SEN and Disability listed in the Codes of Practice (DfEE, 1994; DfES 2001). It separated these needs into four categories: communication and interaction; cognition and learning; sensory and/or physical needs and social, emotional and behaviour development. As shown above, the 'new' SEMH category (DfE and DoH, 2015) appears no different to SEBD (Norwich and Eaton, 2015) but confusion over its definition remains.

Teachers have talked of their confusion and concern when supporting children experiencing SEBD (Mowat, 2015). Mowat's research in two local education authorities in Scotland involved interviewing teachers, support group leaders and pupils in upper primary and lower secondary schools. Six case study pupils identified with SEBD were selected and used as the focus for questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. In her discussion, Mowat (2015) argued that the teachers did not have a clear view about: what inclusion looked like; how effective it was for children who were exhibiting disruptive or disturbing

behaviours; and that there were no clear or fixed ideas about what inclusion was. Mowat (2015) stated that each teacher seemed to interpret children's needs differently based on the nature of the environment, child, other pupils and themselves. Clough and Lindsey (1991), drawing on a study of teachers and support workers in a city-based local education authority who were responsible for supporting learners who had difficulties in reading, reported that "the majority of teachers surveyed ranked the needs of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties as being the most difficult to meet" (p135). These conclusions are supported by Thacker, Strudwick and Babbedge (2002), who carried out a two-year collaborative research study with eighteen teachers in a mainstream school that included children identified as having SEBD. The study provided insights into the teachers' perspectives of what it was like to support learners exhibiting challenging behaviours. They recognised that the nature of the needs of children identified as having SEBD made teachers' work even more complex and challenging than it was when teaching children placed within the other three categories of SEN and disability listed in the SEN Codes of Practice (DfEE, 1994; DfES 2001). Likewise, Goodman and Burton (2010) in their small-scale study of SEBD in English mainstream schools, recognised that teachers faced greater challenges in their teaching when the attributed special educational need had social, emotional and behavioural difficulties as its basis.

Macleod (2006) highlighted that one difficulty may be the breadth of ways in which the needs of children allocated to the SEBD category are interpreted. Drawing on an analysis of the history of policy regarding SEBD in Scotland, she considered such differences in relation to three ways of thinking of children identified as having SEBD. Her research involved finding out the views of secondary school pupils in two Scottish schools. She talked to 14 children altogether, and identified that the way in which teachers regarded the children who demonstrated challenging behaviours, had an influence on how children also saw themselves. Macleod (2006) distinguished between three perspectives that the teachers used to define the behaviours exhibited by the children.

MacLeod (2006) recognised that the perspectives used by teachers to explain the causes of challenging behaviours were ‘bad’, ‘mad’ and ‘sad’ and I discuss each of these in depth in the following sections. There are implications of having such views about the reasons for certain behaviours. Teachers’ perspectives will define and shape discussions about the children with colleagues. The perspectives teachers have of children will influence the way they talk about them and act towards them.

Distinction between ‘sad/mad/bad’ perspectives reflects research in psychiatry and criminology which explores the ways in which atypical behaviour demonstrated by adults has been understood. For example, Thompson (1986) and Nunn (2011) referred to these distinctions in their discussions on psychiatry and Tucker (1999) reflected on comparative elements of ‘bad’ and ‘mad’ perspectives relating to criminal behaviours. Wright (2009) explored how these different perspectives have emerged from different disciplinary traditions,

the received professional discourse offers three distinct but connected meta-discourses of children’s behaviour—those of criminology, psychiatry and patronage—which in turn construct children as ‘bad, mad or sad’ (Wright, 2009, p287).

Snelgrove (2005) also referred to the three perspectives to support her argument for developing inclusive approaches to carrying out research with learners who she identified as having intellectual disabilities. Macleod’s (2006) application however, is most pertinent to this study as it considers the way in which teachers use the perspectives of ‘mad’, ‘bad’ and ‘sad’ to categorise the behaviours of some children. Each description reflects the psycho-medical, or individual model as described in Section 2.3. Children, from each perspective, are regarded as having something ‘wrong’ with them which has led to them being either deviant, medically diagnosed or socially deprived.

***Note on the use of ‘bad’, ‘mad’ and ‘sad’***

*The terms ‘bad’, ‘mad’ and ‘sad’ are used within this study as a form of shorthand. The perspectives describe the ways in which teachers seem to*

*categorise different explanations for how they perceive children's behaviours. There is no suggestion that this is a way of categorising children, nor that these terms are appropriate for individuals. I also recognise that this is not a terminology which schools have adopted. I acknowledge that these perspectives provide a way of distinguishing between different kinds of assumptions that underpin the practices of teachers and policy. It must also be recognised that the 'bad/mad/sad' categories provide three possible perspectives but that this does not suggest that these are the only categories or that the 'sorting' of behaviours into the categories is a clear-cut and neat process. Therefore, in what follows, I refer to 'bad/mad/sad' but appreciate that they are shorthand terms which encapsulate a more complex representation of assumptions about behaviour.*

### **2.4.3 Discourses of SEBD**

Scrutiny of the works of a range of authors who focus on the perceptions and practices of teachers relating to SEBD identifies that there is inconsistent use of the term 'discourse'. In this section, it is shown that Macleod (2006) refers to categories of SEBD as 'perspectives'. Whilst Wright (2009), who also reflects on the perspectives of teachers, chooses to describe them as 'discourses'. In Section 2.3, I referred to Runswick-Cole and Hodge's (2009) reflections on discourses influenced by special educational needs and special educational rights, and in Chapter 4, there are further references to discourses when discussing teachers' identities. Therefore, clarification of 'discourse' and how it is understood and used in this study is required.

Wright (2009) identified "the discourses that professionals, who work in formal educational contexts, adopt when they talk and think about children" (p280). She recognised that discourses are shaped by views, beliefs and practices. She clarified that "discourse constructs the speaker and writer as well as ... what they are speaking and writing about" (p280). MacLure (2003) in *Discourse in Educational and Social Research*, recognised that "definitions of discourse are difficult, because the word has very different disciplines" (p20) and

Threadgold (2000) also identified diversity in the way in which discourse is defined. Gee (1999) distinguished between discourse with a lower case 'd' and Discourse with a capital 'D',

when "little d" discourse (language-in-use) is melded integrally with nonlanguage "stuff" to enact specific identities and activities, then, I say that "big D" Discourses are involved (Gee, 1999, p7).

Fairclough (n.d.) provided more specific focus on discourse by reflecting on discourse within organisations. He described how organisations create discourses which are particular to the individuals who work within them. He acknowledged the differences between discourse in written materials, such as texts and publications, and those that stem from verbal interactions. In either case, the 'text' is shaped by what individuals think and believe and by what they do and how they act. In relation to Fairclough's (n.d.) definition of organisations, it is possible to regard educational settings as relevant to this study. I consider the discourse of teachers in primary schools who experience working with children who exhibit disruptive or challenging behaviours. What they talk about is specific to the events they encounter, including the interactions they have with children. These can lead to teachers forming views about what has happened and about the behaviours exhibited by the children involved. Macleod (2006) described these views as 'perspectives' and argued that such perspectives shape the way in which teachers practise.

In light of these perspectives, I consider the use of discourse to mean what individuals do and say, and clarify that talk is an embodiment of practice and beliefs. I also acknowledge that beliefs and practice influence talk and vice versa. Macleod (2006) and Wright (2009) discussed how teachers 'construct' perspectives of children as being 'bad', 'mad' or 'sad' through discourses and that, as a result, their beliefs shape their own behaviours towards the children. This can, in turn, perpetuate the beliefs they form.

These discourses reduce children to essentialist medical, sociological and psychological constructions ... Essentialist discourses that construct children as bad, mad or sad have resulted



in a polarised response of ‘care and sympathy’, on the one hand, and ‘blame and discipline’, on the other (Wright, 2009, p288).

I discuss in the next section how discourse plays out with specific reference to the categorisation of challenging behaviours. I consider each of Macleod’s three perspectives in turn, expanding on the assumptions underpinning each of them, and citing policies that have reflected and upheld them.

#### **2.4.4 ‘Bad’**

When children are characterised as ‘bad’, they are considered to be responsible for their behaviour. There is an assumption that these children are ‘choosing to be naughty’ and therefore ‘need’ strategies which will change their behaviours to ones which are considered contextually appropriate (Macleod, 2006). This perspective of behaviour is considered to stem from “individual deficits” (Macleod, 2006, p159) which can be addressed through behaviourist approaches associated with child development theories (Doherty and Hughes, 2014). Skinner’s operant conditioning theory (1953) is fundamental to this perspective. His research explored how the behaviour of individuals could be shaped and reinforced through positive or negative responses provided by those around them. The use of rewards and sanctions in schools is common and Skinner’s theory has been the basis of educational guidance about behaviour management for over twenty-five years (Payne, 2015). The Elton Report (HM Gov, 1989) was one of the earliest documents published by the government which recognised a link between behaviour in the classroom and effective learning. It made recommendations that a whole school ethos and policies should be put into place to ensure that teachers were proactive in addressing such behaviour issues. This belief, that teachers were responsible for managing what was seen as inappropriate behaviour, was repeated by Steer in another government-commissioned report into behaviour in schools (DfES, 2005b). The report seemed to promote the view that managing behaviour was something that schools ‘did to’ the children,

schools also need to have positive strategies for managing pupil behaviour that help pupils understand their school's expectations, underpinned by a range of rewards and sanctions, which are applied fairly and consistently by all staff (DfES, 2005b, p12).

This expectation, for a teacher-led series of strategies to manage children and their behaviour, revealed more than just a set of beliefs about what kinds of policy and approaches were appropriate. Clough, Garner, Pardeck and Yuen (2005) asserted that it was,

a scarcely disguised assumption ... that these school students are manipulative, capable of controlling their actions and unwilling to comply with the work orientation of school (p11).

The assumption that pupils were choosing to behave inappropriately and deliberately challenging the authority of teachers seemed to attribute blame to them. Shearman (2006) argued that this view, where the fault lies with the child - the psycho-medical/individual or deficit view of SEN – could only be addressed through a social model approach in which it is the school ethos that is not effective,

if a school is having problems including a behaviourally disturbed child, the fault lies with the school's behaviour policy which is somehow not broad enough, not flexible enough, not welcoming enough (p57).

Current education policy demonstrates a behavioural and disciplinarian approach to tackling behaviour, as described in *Behaviour and Discipline in Schools* (DfE, 2016). However, Wright (2009) warned that such guidance could lead to teachers' acceptance that the behaviourist approach is the *only* response available to them when faced with challenging behaviours and therefore that the use of rewards and sanctions in their classrooms is the only strategy available to them. As outlined above, this approach is shaped by the operant conditioning theory developed by Skinner (1953). The children are rewarded for the behaviours which teachers approve of and issue sanctions to those children who are deemed to be 'bad'. Examples of these approaches are described by authors such as Roffey (2011) and Rogers (2009). Rewards may include 'smiley faces', stickers, or verbal praise from the teacher; whereas

sanctions may be a reprimand, time out of the classroom, the taking away of minutes from break time or being sent to a senior member of staff. School policy documents typically outline the systems used for behaviour management, but they tend to centre around the belief that children who choose to behave inappropriately, such as those who might be perceived as being 'bad', need some kind of positive and negative reinforcement to help them understand that their behaviour is either 'good' or 'bad'. Payne (2015), in her research into the use of rewards and sanctions in UK schools, identified that sanctions and rewards do not always promote the kinds of behaviours that teachers hope for, and that they can be counter-productive and unsuccessful. Whatever the outcome though, this approach perpetuates the belief that children are able to change their behaviour as a result of measures of control and management in the classroom.

#### **2.4.5 'Mad'**

Macleod used the second category 'mad' to refer to the way in which teachers sometimes perceive that children behave badly as a result of diagnoses or deficits. Wright (2009) argued that teachers needed to identify these deficiencies so that they could respond accordingly through their teaching and understanding. Children whose behaviour is understood in this way are considered to have a medical reason for exhibiting challenging or disruptive conduct. Typically cited examples of these are: attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and oppositional defiance disorder (ODD) (NHS, 2016). Wright (2009) stated that children regarded as having behavioural difficulties "are conceptualised by difference, disability and marginalisation, and our response is often that they require medications, such as Ritalin, to control their behaviour" (p288). The link between a medical diagnosis and behaviour distinguishes this perspective from the 'bad' category because it is assumed that the children are not choosing to behave differently to their peers; they just cannot help it.

Typical school practices centre around the assessment and diagnosis to explain behaviours and deficits that stem from the child, and this usually results in interventions and individual or group support. Ongoing assessments identify the learning needs of the children and this results in setting specific targets which are intended to help the children make progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding. The *SEND Code of Practice* (DfE and DoH, 2015) refers to the need for a personalised learning approach in which children receive support based on their personal needs. Groom and Rose (2005) acknowledged that one-to-one and group support for such children was often successful in raising attainment. Their research with UK schools into the effectiveness and practices of teaching assistants (TA) confirmed that those children assessed and diagnosed with SEN were often assigned a TA to support their learning. The process of identification of medicalised needs, such as those associated with Macleod's (2006) 'mad' category, often results in SEN funding. This funding is typically used to pay for resources, one of which is human: the TA. The TA will support the child and ensure that they can access teaching within the classroom. Groom and Rose (2005) identified the following aspects of the TA role which resulted in successful provision,

time for establishing individual positive relationships with pupils, good listening skills; working with pupil in class, on a one-to-one and across contexts including lunchtimes/playgrounds; qualities of fairness, patience and tolerance; understanding of pupils' difficulties; have a range of strategies to deploy (Groom and Rose, 2005, p29).

#### **2.4.6 'Sad'**

Macleod's third category 'sad' refers to the way children's experiences are regarded as resulting from societal circumstances. From this perspective, children are thought to be expressing trauma, abuse, neglect and unfulfilled basic human needs, such as hunger and fear, through their behaviour. This is an alternative perception to the medical 'mad' or the calculated 'bad' and places the blame on societal structures and inadequacies. It asserts that children are behaving differently because they are victims of poor upbringing. Wright (2009) confirmed that "the discourse acknowledges wider social factors and is one of

‘welfare’, care, nurture or therapy” (p288). Children perceived as being ‘sad’ are thought of as being vulnerable. They may be exposed to home and community experiences which put them at risk, such as, drug use, child trafficking, violence or lack of care (Goepel, Childerhouse and Sharpe, 2015). Some children may have been removed from their homes and families and placed in the care of others who can assure their safety and provide food, shelter, attention and comfort. Children who are placed in alternate care are described as being ‘looked after’ and this category is included within SEN focused government policy.

#### **2.4.7 Commentary on the links between perspectives and models of disability**

The ‘mad’, ‘bad’ and ‘sad’ perspectives can be linked with the individual psycho-medical model of disability. Each of the categories that teachers may use to describe children’s behaviour tend to relate to a deficit within them and this has an impact on how the teachers may respond to, and teach them. Each perspective reflects teachers’ views that the children behave unlike the rest of their peers because they are ‘different’. This may be because they consider the children to have a medical diagnosis which identifies the need for medicalisation; or that they feel the children have experienced trauma or neglect which results in certain types of behaviours; or that they are considered to be wilful or naughty. In each case, the deficit is attributed to the child.

It is possible to make some links to the social model of disability too. Children who are perceived as behaving inappropriately due to ‘sad’, ‘bad’ or ‘mad’ circumstances may have become ‘dis-abled’ due to societal factors such as neglect, poor role modelling or exposure to harmful substances, such as drugs or alcohol.

Regardless of how the perspectives are arrived at, Wright (2009) and Macleod (2006) confirmed that teachers’ discourses and relationships with the children can be influenced by their views and beliefs about the reasons behind the

behaviours they experience. These perceptions are simplified examples though, the discourses teachers construct are complex, overlap and are subject to change. In the next section, I describe how this complexity can lead to confusion for teachers.

## **2.5 Summary: confusing perspectives and confusing practices**

In the previous Sections, 2.3 and 2.4, I have outlined various models of disability and perspectives that teachers seem to have about children they teach. This range of ways of categorising and viewing what it is like to teach children with SEN, and more specifically, SEBD, suggests a complex picture. Teachers are presented with policy and guidance which reflects different views and affiliations to different models of disability. Teachers also develop different ways of regarding children with SEBD (MacLeod, 2006), though none of these approaches or perspectives are structured in a linear fashion; they overlap, contradict and confuse. In this study, the varying views of the participating teachers represents such confusion. In Chapters 6, 7 and 8 the teachers present muddled and contradictory stories and views about their experiences of teaching children identified with SEBD in their schools.

The confused concoctions of views and experiences of teachers matter. They are confused because they are presented with both medical and social models of disability in legislation and policy (DfE and DoH, 2015) which shape different practices. Norwich and Eaton (2015) in their review of the SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015) identified that,

The tension between prescriptive versus responsive planning approaches can be seen as an expression of a well-worn and familiar tension between the medical and the social models of disability (p127).

The debates between Disability Studies academics have continued for decades without agreement (Oliver, 2013) and seem set to continue for some time to come (Baglieri, Valle, Connor and Gallagher, 2011). In light of this, teachers are trying to shape their practice within the arena of ongoing debate. Teachers are required to refer to categorisations and labelling (DfE and DoH, 2015) which

denies children the right to an 'ordinary' school life. Teachers are being de-skilled because they must follow guidance and models which they know are inappropriate for the children they work with. So, instead of using teaching approaches which are personalised for each child and based on their professional judgements, they are having to follow ideological models which are generalised and impersonal. Burton, Bartlett and de Cuevas' (2009) research of multi-agency professionals' views of working with secondary school aged children identified as having BESD/SEBD identifies confusion and contradiction.

Professionals from across education and children's services highlighted confused and contradictory messages for the treatment of and priority afforded to young people with BESD within the education system ... although the social inclusion agenda appears to have encouraged professionals to move away from regarding behaviour in isolation towards looking at the whole needs of the child, contradictory practices, attitudes and competing personal, organisation and political priorities persist (Burton, Bartlett and de Cuevas, 2009, p152).

I argue that this confusion persists, and consider how teachers' in primary schools present their experiences and what they say about how it impacts on their relationships with the children, and on their roles.

The attitudes of teachers are also influenced by the models and perspectives of disability in light of teaching and interventions. Teachers identify a range of strategies and interventions such as Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) (DfES, 2005a), nurture groups<sup>3</sup> (Bennathan and Boxall, 1996) and medicalisation which are designed to address impairments they consider to be relevant to some children. As a result, this raises teachers' expectations and beliefs of the merits of interventions that are required to 'normalise' (Oliver and Barnes, 2012) the children identified with SEBD so that they will 'fit in' to the existing education system. Therefore, teachers' practice incorporating interventions is perpetuated and based upon a deficit model, which ultimately legitimises disabling attitudes towards children (Simpson, 1989). Tomlinson (2012) referred to an "expanded and expensive SEN industry" (p267) and this

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<sup>3</sup> This is discussed in greater detail in Section 2.6

appears to reflect increasing demands by schools seeking support for children identified with SEN. Such support includes,

The continued need for resourcing on the basis of a diagnosis; an increasing number and range of parents seeking such a diagnosis for their child; teachers, under pressure to raise standards, seeking to remove troublesome pupils from their classrooms; and an expanding number of professionals and practitioners needing to increase their client base (Allan and Youdell, 2015, p2).

Appreciation of the influence and confusion that models of disability can promote, as described in this section, helps to make sense of what can seem in the teachers' narratives discussed in the chapters that follow, to be contradictory and inconsistent. It helps to identify how teachers sometimes present disabling attitudes towards the children they teach.

In the next section I consider curricular provision relating specifically to the social and emotional education of children in primary schools in England.

## **2.6 A personal, social and emotional curriculum**

Each successive government has issued multiple policies since the 1988 Education Act (HM Gov, 1988) to shape the expectations of, and practices within, schools. This has resulted in the need for teachers to re-address their approaches to teaching in order to meet the aims and objectives detailed within such policies. Below, I explore government policy and curriculum design which is relevant to social and emotional education.

The current *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) introduced by the Department for Education to schools in 2013 and 2014 identifies subject specific programmes of study which are statutory. Whilst some of the content has evolved, it remains recognisable from its inception in 1988 (DES, 1988). However, the various incarnations of the government appointed education office - Department for Education and Science (DfES, 1964 - 1992), Department for Education (DfE, 1992 - 1995), Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, 1995 - 2001),



Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2001 – 2007), Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2007 – 2010), and Department for Education (DfE, 2010 – present day) - have not shared a consistent view of the status and inclusion of specific subjects.

The Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum (DCSF, 2007; DfE, 2013) highlighted the generic outcomes for all children. This, in conjunction with the *SEN Code of Practice* (DfEE, 1994; DfES, 2001) identified inclusive education in mainstream schools as the key focus and approach for meeting the needs of children unable to access typical teaching and learning approaches. In conjunction with this, an increase in a performance-related and assessment-driven culture for schools led to concerns that the specific needs of children identified as having SEBD were not being met (Broadfoot, 2001). The *Every Child Matters* agenda (DfES, 2004b) and *Social Emotional Aspects of Learning* guidance (SEAL) (DfES, 2005a) were introduced in response to concerns about care and education for all children, but especially for those seen as having neglectful upbringings or who demonstrate behaviours indicating social and emotional difficulties. An independent review by Macdonald as to whether or not PSHE education should be made statutory was held (DCSF, 2009b). The government's response to the Macdonald review came in the form of a proposed new primary curriculum (DCSF, 2010), which was published and introduced to schools one year prior to its planned formal implementation in September 2010. Personal, social and emotional education was identified as a core aspect, the first time it had been given such high status. In April 2010, the Labour government was replaced by a Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government following a general election, and all plans for the primary curriculum were halted. Legislative proposals were published in the white paper *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010a) and wide-ranging changes in teaching, curriculum, behaviour, schools and accountability were proposed. Since this change in government, the new Department for Education has introduced a *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) which, continues to focus on assessment, accountability and attainment based learning (Jones, 2016). A curriculum with a pastoral focus has not been given priority status despite the recommendations to do so in the government commissioned research into the behaviour and

attainment of pupils with atypical behaviour (Anderton and Westwood, 2010, and C4EO, 2010). The recommendations for a pastoral emphasis in the research echoed those made in previous reports by Elton (HM Gov, 1989) and Steer (DfES, 2005b), but a personal, social and emotional curriculum has not been granted statutory status.

Since the introduction of the *National Curriculum*, however, concerns regarding what was perceived by the Government to be a decline in behaviour in schools and society have persisted. In line with the reports by Steer (DfES, 2005b and DCSF, 2009a), the DfE issued guidance documents entitled *Behaviour and Discipline in Schools* (2011a and 2016a) which used terms such as “power”, “penalties for breaking the rules”, “discipline” and “control” (pp1-4). These terms, and this approach, did not sit comfortably with the pastoral education recommendations made by its own department and by theorists and researchers specialising in SEBD as explored in the previous paragraph. Cornwall and Walter had already warned that “the hard-edged punitive and competitive ethos ... has not been successful in reducing disaffection or the extent of social and educational exclusion taking place” (2006, p7).

A personal, social and emotional curriculum is important to this study because it is the only one which specifically addresses the non-academic aspects of a child’s learning; it addresses the more holistic aspects which support knowledge and understanding. Whilst the aims of the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) include the requirement for schools to “promote[s] the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society” (p5) and that “all schools should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education” (p5), detailed curriculum guidance is no longer included in statutory documentation. It has not been given the same focus, depth or recognition that other subjects have. There seems to be conflict in terms of governmental expectation and guidance. Crow (2008) had already identified issues relating to the credibility of PSHE with higher status being awarded to other subjects. Harris (2008) was concerned that the National Curriculum had omitted personal, social and emotional development as a priority focus. Crow claimed that “the power of individual subjects, largely dictated prioritisation,

curriculum resources, subject credibility, and teacher time and expertise” (p47) would all have an impact on PSHE provision in schools. His argument that the PSHE curriculum had “low status” (p43) was not just true when he was writing, but remains today, given its exclusion from the subjects’ programmes of study in the current *Primary National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013).

It is helpful to consider why this exclusion is relevant for this study and how this omission relates to wider aims and guidance issued by the Department for Education. The Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DfE, 2015) guidance recognised the links between social and emotional need and inappropriate behaviour in schools. It suggested that there is a direct correlation between mental health and behaviour. The Department for Education stated, based on their own research data, that “one in ten children and young people aged 5 to 16 have a clinically diagnosed mental health disorder and around one in seven has less severe problems” (DfE, 2015, p4). It went on to state that,

This non-statutory advice clarifies the responsibility of the school, outlines what they can do and how to support a child or young person whose behaviour – whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise – may be related to an unmet mental health need (p4).

The expectation that schools should be addressing such significant concerns whilst withdrawing the status of PSHE, the only subject that identified the personalised needs of pupils, appears to be contradictory. Recognising that “seemingly against all the odds, *some* [my italics] children exposed to significant risk factors develop into competent, confident and caring adults” (DfE, 2015, p8) also seems to be saying that *many* children recognised with difficulties, do not. The links between poor familial relationships, low self-esteem, traumatic experiences and socio-economic disadvantage identified in the Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools guidance (DfE, 2015) and resonant with Macleod’s (2006) perspectives of children who are ‘sad’, heighten the likelihood of children being at risk. Aloni (1997), over a decade earlier, had also identified the implications of socio-cultural deprivation and personal development,

Poverty, crime, homelessness ... and the disintegration of communities and families ... are facts of life that affect directly the physical, emotional, intellectual and oral development of the great majority of children in our culture (p94).

Alexander (2010) also linked social, emotional and cognitive development and stated that without an appropriate curriculum, social, emotional and behavioural needs cannot be addressed adequately. The government expectations seem to make assumptions about children's social needs and their mental health. The guidance (DfE, 2015) suggests that teachers need to be proactive in providing the support required. Yet, it does not acknowledge or critique its own statutory provision which frames the extent to which teachers can do this. However, even if the PSHE curriculum, in its current form, were to be given prioritised status, it would still not address the emotional and social needs discussed above. It highlights "drug education, financial education, sex and relationship education (SRE) and the importance of physical activity and diet for a healthy lifestyle" (DfE, 2013) as the areas to be covered; none of these areas directly address self-esteem, the developmental implications of social disadvantage or emotional well-being. The overall aim to raise standards through provision of a rigorous national curriculum has been made clear by the government (Ball, 2013; Goodson, 2014). However, the government's prescribed curriculum only seems to address the academic provision for teaching and learning. The speech made by Lord Adonis to the House of Lords sits well with Alexander's recommendations (2010) that "raising educational standards and promoting pupil well-being are mutually reinforcing" (Hansard, 2006).

The *Social Emotional Aspects of Learning* (SEAL) guidance was introduced in 2005 (DfES, 2005a). This was published in response to the *Every Child Matters* agenda (DfES, 2004b) which identified that some children were particularly vulnerable due to societal influences and experiences, such as neglect or abuse. The aims were "designed to support relationships, behaviour and learning" (p48) and Crow confirmed that "the programme has been well received" (2008, p48). SEAL was highly regarded by Alexander (2010) who reiterated the SEAL initiative's aims and the belief that "biological, social, emotional and intellectual aspects of learning are inextricably woven" (2010,

p13). Hallam (2009) carried out a study into the impact SEAL had on behaviour, well-being and learning in schools. Responses to questionnaires and interviews from 172 primary schools in 25 local education authorities in the UK revealed predominantly positive responses by teachers.

Of the school staff, 90% agreed that the programme had been at least relatively successful overall. All responding head teachers; 87% of teachers and 96% of non-teaching staff agreed that the programme promoted the emotional wellbeing of children, while 82% of teachers agreed that it increased pupils' ability to control emotions such as anger. (Hallam, 2009, p313).

Hallam acknowledged that there were limitations to her research because it was not possible to say if the identified changes in behaviour or well-being of the children were due to the SEAL programme. She did conclude that the teachers and children who participated in her research benefitted from the programme,

... positive outcomes of the implementation of the programme included the introduction of the language of emotion into schools, increased awareness of difficult emotions and the provision of ways and materials to consider them, and the facilitation of the development of staff social and emotional skills (Hallam, 2009, p329).

SEAL has not retained its priority focus in schools since the increasingly subject-specific curriculum issued by the coalition Conservative/Liberal Democrat Government (2010-2015) and the current Conservative Government. A return to the '3Rs' as seen in the latter half of the 1800s, where basic skills were considered to be the main goal, is evident in the current education agenda. The former prime minister, David Cameron, clarified his commitment for an effective curriculum, and although he stopped short of using the '3Rs' phrase, his message was explicit, "I am clear about one area we need to focus on: literacy and numeracy. We inherited a situation where one in three children left primary school unable to read, write and add up properly" (Cameron, 2015). Cameron's statement made it clear that the priority for the government in terms of curricular provision and expectations of learning will continue to focus on the subject-specifics of English and Mathematics.

Having explored the curriculum and the lack of priority for a personal, social and emotional element within it, I now consider the way in which it is delivered to children in mainstream primary schools.

### **2.6.1 A curriculum for children identified with SEBD**

In this section I consider how the *National Curriculum* (2013) is typically delivered within primary schools and reflect on the extent to which this meets the needs of children who have been identified with SEBD.

Smith (1996, 2000) listed four ways of viewing a curriculum, from “knowledge to be transmitted ... an attempt to achieve certain ends ... [a] process ... and as praxis” (p2) and that all require different levels of ownership by the recipients, in this case, the children. However, the extent to which the children can access the curriculum being transmitted, Smith described as questionable and relying on assumptions that they can benefit from this teaching approach. The expectation of this transmission model is that children are able to receive, absorb and learn from the information that is given to them. An image of a classroom in which children sit facing the teacher, who stands at the front delivering ‘knowledge’, would be appropriate for this model of teaching.

Corbett and Norwich (2005) questioned whether certain types of teaching methods were appropriate for children who may find it difficult to learn. They discussed the necessity for different types of teaching approaches in response to the different needs of learners:

What is at issue here is the wider and more general question of whether different teaching methods or pedagogies are more suited to some children and not others across the full range of abilities and attainments. (Corbett and Norwich, 2005, p15).

Hanko (2005) argued that children who are identified as having difficulties in terms of their learning or behaviour need additional support to help them access the curriculum and the teaching therein. She described how children who were

unable to access the teaching or the content of the curriculum were less likely to achieve and that this could affect their attainment as measured through the assessments and tests that are routinely carried out in schools. This could then lead to those children being regarded as “liabilities” (Hanko, 2005, p142) as they cause disruption, require additional attention and prevent their peers from learning. The threat of exclusion from the classroom, the curriculum and/or the teaching for those children who cause such disruption is likely. This results in the children being excluded from that particular curriculum.

It is also important to acknowledge how relevant a curriculum may be to the learners it is written for in addition to the way in which it is delivered; the lack of relevance may also be responsible for the lack of access for some learners. This is relevant in terms of the current subject-specific and attainment-focused aims in the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013). Moll, Amanti, Neff and González (1992) in their studies on the links between the knowledge gained by children from the home in which they live and the curriculum they are taught in schools offer an alternate way of thinking. They refer to ‘funds of knowledge’ which children already develop and how such knowledge and skills is amassed from parents, life experiences and the cultures in their communities. Their view that “these historically-accumulated and culturally-developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (Moll, et al, 1992, p133) mean that children bring different kinds of knowledge, skills and understandings to school but that these may not align with what is included within the school curriculum. Therefore, it is not just the way in which the curriculum is delivered which causes difficulties for some learners (Corbett and Norwich, 2005) but the relevance of the content too. The children who do well in terms of learning and assessment may be those for whom the curriculum aligns with their existing knowledge (Moll, et al, 1992). Kamler and Comber (2005) reflected on how teachers’ understanding and acknowledgement of pupils’ existing and prior experiences in life could influence the levels of engagement and attitudes pupils demonstrate in literacy lessons. The teachers they collaborated with in their research were based in classrooms which supported learners identified as being ‘at-risk’ and who were difficult to engage. Rather than viewing the children and their families through a deficit model (as in

Macleod's (2006) 'mad', 'bad' and 'sad' perspectives), they built up a picture of what the children did know and could do. This was then used as a basis for their literacy teaching. They described how they developed lessons which incorporated the children's existing interests and how these enabled them to 'turn-around' their teaching approaches. Cornwall and Walter (2006) also identified that it is the perception of what, or who, the curriculum is for that needs to be considered,

A perspective that puts the young person squarely at the centre of the process, as opposed to one that places either the National Curriculum or the politics of social inclusion at the centre, enables us to develop clearer educational pathways in helping them to gain access to participate in and engage with their learning opportunities (p51).

Such examples highlight how a more flexible and responsive curriculum may enable teachers to be more inclusive in their teaching.

Anastasiou and Kauffman (2011) considered the content of the curriculum and how it needs to meet the requirements of those unable to access the 'one-size-fits-all' curriculum. They called for a specialised curriculum to address the problems of curricular exclusion. Their view that "general education has much less flexibility than special education in accommodating the needs of atypical children because of curriculum restraints" (p379) is in line with that of Kamler and Comber (2005) but recommends a change to the curriculum rather than a change to the teaching approach. Swann, Peacock, Hart and Drummond (2012) offered an alternative way of regarding and implementing the curriculum in *Creating Learning Without Limits*. They argued that attainment, testing and the setting of learning targets can lead teachers to regard learning as predictable, linear and determined by "a fixed, internal capacity" (p1). Their project with nine teachers "motivated by a particular view of learning: learning free from unnecessary limits imposed by ability-based practices" (p4) demonstrated that positive learning experiences can be achieved,

... while subject to the same statutory curricular requirements, external expectations and national assessment pressures as every other teacher ... [these] nine teachers all recognized that there was so much more that



could be done to lift limits on learning and enhance the learning capacity of their students if groups of teachers, departments, whole-school staffs or even whole-school communities were to work together towards a common vision, with shared principles and purposes to guide their work of creating environments for learning free from the constraints imposed by ability labelling and ability-based practices (p7).

Swann, et al. (2012) demonstrated that it is not a one-size-fits-all curriculum which is problematic for learners, including those labelled as SEBD (Anastasiou and Kauffman, 2011), but the way in which the teachers perceive it.

One further example of change to the implementation of the curriculum is through the provision of nurture groups. Bennathan and Boxall used Bowlby's attachment theory (1982) as the fundamental tenet for developing and providing nurture groups in London in 1960s and 1970s. They argued (Boxall and Lucas, 2010) that poor attachment in very young children would lead to insecurities and low confidence levels later in life and that these were often demonstrated through inappropriate or challenging behaviours. In some ways, this approach aligns with the 'mad' perspective because these groups, which have been introduced in many schools throughout the United Kingdom, continue to subscribe to the view that 'behaviour is a form of communication' (Boxall and Lucas, 2010) and that children behave the way they do because of a deficit in their social and developmental progress. Their pastoral support programme is designed to run alongside the subject specific curriculum whilst addressing the barriers to learning experienced by the children. The support involves part-time, small group activities that focus on developmental progress which has been observed by teachers to be lacking in some children:

[By] recreating in school the total experience of a normally developing child from babyhood onwards [pupils are more able to] make sense of their experiences [and] to feel some control over their environment and to internalise some control over their behaviour (Bennathan and Boxall, 1996, p9).

This appears to embrace the medical and social approach in tandem. Children are identified as having deficits within their selves which suggests a medical problem that needs to be addressed and 'cured'. However, the approach with

which to do this is fundamentally based on the social model whereby the environment is changed and shaped and made accessible, with the intention of enabling the child to develop the social and emotional skills required for learning in mainstream classrooms. The nurture group provision uses an approach which identifies a deficit within the child which needs addressing through individualised and exclusive support, prior to full time reintegration in the mainstream classroom. There, the children can continue to develop the skills learnt in the nurture group. Visser, Cole and Daniels (2002) argued that an interim stepping stone between the exclusion to specialist support and inclusive approaches was vital. Iszatt and Wasilewska (1997) confirmed that success rates of up to 97% for successful reintegration into the mainstream classroom and access to the mainstream curriculum have been reported. Proponents of nurture groups argue that following the intervention the child has a greater opportunity to access the subjects taught, make progress in terms of attainment and is able to reach inclusion within school and ultimately, society in general.

This review of strategies and approaches suggests that it is unclear which kind of provision may be most appropriate for those children identified with SEBD. The current statutory curriculum no longer includes the teaching of social and emotional skills as a priority. Without this explicit inclusion, the reality that teachers will devote the greater proportion of the week to the core subjects, English, Mathematics and Science, and the Foundation subjects such as History and Computing, is understandable. Without the time, direction or resources, however, this aspect of learning is likely to be neglected (Crow, 2008; Harris, 2008). The recognition that education is not all about transmission of subject-specific knowledge and skills suggests that a pastoral and caring curriculum which demonstrates to children “that the adults in their schools and communities care about them, that their well-being and growth matter” (Noddings, 2002, p26) is required. A pastoral curriculum does not necessarily lead to an acceptance of the child as being the problem, nor does it ignore the inclusive approach as described within Section 2.3, but it does recognise that the ‘one-size-fits-all’ curriculum does not meet the needs of all children or the teachers delivering it.

I acknowledge that the current National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) was proposed by the government as a 'skeleton' curriculum. The guidance to teachers from the DfE describes the curriculum as one in which teachers are given greater freedom and opportunity to develop the content and delivery so that it is appropriate and personalised for the learners in their classrooms (DfE, 2013). However, critics like Jones (2016), argue that the links to testing, measurable progress and accountability mean that most schools devote the majority of the timetable to those subjects which are scrutinised.

In the next section I consider how neoliberal influences on society, and on education in particular, has led to policy and practice which is underpinned by testing and accountability. Therefore, the time, opportunity and desire to embellish the 'skeleton curriculum' is reduced.

## **2.7 Neoliberal influences on policy for the education of children identified with SEBD**

In this section, I identify how the influences of marketisation and competition within society have directly impacted on policy and practice within the Primary education system. I then describe how these influences can be seen in the way teachers work and explore the implications this has on learners identified as having SEBD.

### **2.7.1 Neoliberalism in society**

In this section I define and explain aspects of neoliberalism. An understanding of the concepts and resulting practices associated with this ideology will provide the backdrop for considering one influential aspect on the current education system in the UK. In the subsequent sections I discuss the impact of these on the primary education system and on the role and expectation of teachers in schools.

Liberalism was the ideological influence which shaped government control, marketisation and economics, workforce and human labour in the second half of the 18th century in the UK and USA in particular. The belief, demonstrated through capitalist practices, was that the markets, developed and shaped by owners of companies and businesses, would be self-governing. The costs of production and the control of goods would be kept in check due to each company trying to outdo the others. This meant that the price of commodities would be kept down and additional control by the government would not be needed (Turner, 2008). In order to produce such commodities, company owners would manage their workforce, attempt to keep the costs of labour, goods and production to a minimum so that their profits remained high (Britannica, 2016). However, criticisms of liberalism by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* published in 1776 (1910), identified that poverty, inequality, insecurity and maltreatment were the bi-products of marketisation. In order to keep profits high, the workforce was paid less, expected to do more and only those individuals who were able to demonstrate they were effective workers would flourish. Therefore, those considered to be unable to work were not employed and did not receive a wage on which to live. Marx and Engels (1848, 2008) criticised the lack of opportunity that the majority of the population were afforded because they were not able to set up their own companies due to the lack of funds or property needed. Clarke (2016) described the

Polarisation of wealth and poverty as money accumulated in the hands of a minority, while the majority lost the means to earn their own living and were forced to labour for others. Thenceforward, the minority would further accumulate their capital on the basis of their appropriation of the unpaid labour of the majority, so that the polarisation of wealth and poverty would be cumulative (p3).

The impact upon individuals in society was that the majority became poorer, whilst the minority of property owners became richer and were able to exert power over the workforce, who needed to earn in order to live. Disease, unsanitary living conditions and a lack of a suitably knowledgeable workforce brought about government intervention in the late 19th century (Britannica, 2016). Public schools, the regulation of working hours and the establishment of health and social services were increasingly introduced to address the

inequality. For almost a hundred years, social welfare became the dominant approach by the government, and public services, including schools, were established. Referred to as the Keynesian welfare state, the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a combination of a mixed economy in which social welfare and liberal policies competed to recognise and meet the needs of all individuals in society. However, Harvey (2005) described how this led to a slowing down of the economy and increasing inflation. The government was unable to fund its budget and meet the economic demands of social welfare and as a result accrued huge financial deficits. This crisis came to a head in the late 1970s and brought about a return to liberalism – referred to as neoliberalism (Turner, 2008).

The growth of neoliberalism, signalled a return to practices seen during liberalism (marketisation, control of the workforce and profit driven economies) and these are central to the policies implemented by the governments today (Davies, 2014). In the UK, a Conservative government spearheaded the neoliberalist agenda through their policies between 1979 and 1992, though as in the manner of liberalism, such policies incorporated reduced governmental interference in economics and the recognition that the markets were self-governing to some extent. The government approved privatisation of national companies over the last 40 years demonstrate that competition between companies is again encouraged (Arestis and Sawyer, 2005). Neoliberalism continues to be identified with the policies issued by successive Labour, coalition Conservative/Liberal Democrat governments and current Conservative governments. Davies (2014) defined neoliberalism as,

An attempt to replace political judgement with economic evaluation, including, but not exclusively, the evaluations offered by markets ... the central defining characteristic of all neoliberal critique is its hostility to the ambiguity of political discourse, and a commitment to the explicitness and transparency of quantitative economic indicators, of which the market price system is the model. Neoliberalism is the pursuit of the disenchantment of politics by economics (Davies, 2014, p3-4).

He identified that a greater emphasis on the driving factors and practices in society as a result of economic development was key to neoliberalism.

Quantitative outcomes are used to shape practice and policy. Therefore, marketisation becomes the guiding factor in decisions made regarding corporate structures and national and international competition in the production of goods. Companies, and business in general, are now self-governed through economic expectations, profit and production, rather than political aspiration and so intervention by the government is reduced (Turner, 2008). Individuals are expected to produce more goods for less so that the companies remain competitive. In order to keep costs low and profits high, as is required in such a competitive market, individuals must compete with each other to show that they are able fulfil their roles better than others around them and the most efficient are the most employable (Seifert and Mather, 2013). As such, individuals in society who are disabled, unable to learn, or meet the demands of those employing them, will be, or become, unemployable. Clarke's critique of the neoliberalist agenda defines the impact neoliberalism has on the way in which individuals within society are considered,

The market is an instrument of 'natural selection' that judges not on the basis of an individual's ability to contribute to society, but on the basis of the individual's ability to contribute to the production of surplus value and the accumulation of capital. This is the moral law that is expressed in the platitudes of neoliberalism (Clarke, 2016, p5).

Therefore, a person's worth is judged by their ability to contribute to the production of goods and ensure profit for companies. Those who are unable to do this are not considered useful, and as a result neoliberalism has brought about a change in how society perceives the individuals within it.

Levidow (2005), in his reflections on the way neoliberalism has impacted on public services, warned that the increasingly ingrained practices and expectations in industry would filter through to the education system. He described that "although officially justified as improving quality and efficiency, such changes [in policy] aim to subordinate education to commercial values and vocational skills" (Levidow, 2005, p156). The next section considers how the neoliberalist ideology which is embedded in industrial practice has influenced and shaped the education system.

### **2.7.2 Neoliberalism in education**

Neoliberal practices rely on the ability of the workforce to produce goods which will ensure competition in the markets and ensure profit for companies. This has a direct impact on the education system. As described by Davies (2014) – referred to in the previous section - transparency in measurable outcomes has been seen as an important way of demonstrating successful practice. In this section, I consider the way in which neoliberal expectations are now fundamental to the structures and systems within education. I demonstrate how the perceived need to be transparent, competitive and successful has shaped education practice and consider how teachers and learners are affected as a result.

Competition between companies for the production and sale of commodities has led to the scrutiny of quantifiable outcomes. Profits, loss, deficits and success in the markets have become the defining criteria in industry (Davies, 2014). Successes and failures are demonstrated through measurement and comparison of percentages, such as an increase or loss in production, sales or profit compared to the last measurement. This practice has impacted on the way in which schools and teachers are now measured (Levidow, 2005).

It has been argued by the Labour government (1997 - 2010) and the successive coalition and Conservative governments (2010 – present), that instilling an ethos of competition will result in rising standards within each school which will lead to an improved education for children (Levidow, 2005). This has led to increased expectations for teachers' and pupils' performance. It has also resulted in greater governmental scrutiny to ensure that improvements are demonstrable and measurable (Ofsted, 2013). Thus, the measurement of pupils' attainment by tests and the monitoring and inspection of schools are required. The outcomes of these are used to provide league tables of effectiveness that parents can use to help them in selecting schools for their children. Davies described how, through this process, "intrinsic values are to be

replaced by extrinsic valuation” (2014, p8); whereby the assessment of pupils was previously regarded as an internal process for the teachers involved, it was now an external process and published for all to see. In light of this, structures and mechanisms within the English education system to promote progress and attainment had to be put in place. This would then enable schools to demonstrate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning that they provided. Such structures include Standard Assessment Tests (SATs), inspections by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), performance related pay for teachers and the growth of academisation of schools. These academies, designed to further enhance competition between schools were regarded by the previous Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, to remove lacklustre and ineffective teaching. Ms Morgan’s announcement (2016) that all schools would be required to become academies by 2020 would signal diminishing local authority leadership in education and increasing acceptance of a market-driven system within the education system for primary and secondary schools. Schools would be in direct competition with each other. Academisation may also resonate with the practices of privatisation identified particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. Hutchings, Francis and Kirby (2015) in their review of the assessment data of secondary school pupils in 34 academy chains, identified that conversion to academy status did not assure increased attainment for identified groups of pupils. Goodson (2014), drew on three decades of prior narrative research experiences and reviews of policy to describe his concerns about the different perceptions that teachers and the public (and parents of pupils in particular) have about the performative-led system currently in place. He argued that whilst parents may regard the extrinsic practices of publishing test results and inspections to be demonstrable of government drives to improve education practices, teachers are much more cautious. In narratives teachers shared with Goodson (2014), they described their concerns about the system per se, and about the effectiveness of what they see and do in their classrooms. These narratives and his broader review of the current education system led him to provide a clear warning regarding the efficacy of neoliberal influenced practices. He stated that such practices were not working,



these countries that have pursued neoliberal reforms in the fastest and deepest manner, such as England, perform very poorly in educational standards... It would seem time to seriously scrutinise the neoliberal orthodoxy in the field of education (p43-44).

However, the latest review of policy by the DfE, following a change of the Secretary of State less than six months after Ms Morgan's statement, suggests that measures for enforced academisation may now be withdrawn. This is yet another change in expectation and highlights the inconsistencies and challenges teachers face in meeting policy. This also impacts on the way in which the education system is perceived by teachers and parents. Parents are encouraged to play a greater role in the education of their children by determining where and by whom they are taught. Teachers are expected to recognise that they are no longer regarded as part of a public service, as they seemed to be perceived in society in the period between liberalism and neoliberalism, but as part of a market driven economy (Ball, 2003). However, the impact on children also needs to be considered. De Lissovoy (2013) clarified the place of the individual within this ideology,

neoliberalism expects public life generally, and education in particular, to understand its principal elements and activities either as inputs or products, whose value has to be demonstrated on the basis of quantitative and standardized measures ... as students perform well or poorly on tests, they are encouraged to understand this performance as a reflection of their own innate capacity and worth (pp 423-428).

The competitive basis which underpins the need to learn prescribed, subject-specific knowledge so that it can be tested, measured, recorded and compared, is recognised to be the current practice in primary and secondary schools. Goodson (2014) voiced concern that children will be seen purely as measures of the current education system and that this will lead to a teaching practice which is designed to fill them with information upon which they can be judged; this approach is resonant with Freire's (1970) banking concept of education. He recognised that,

the more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are. [...] The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the

world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited on them (1970, p53-54).

Therefore, it could be said that the children who are likely to be most successful in the current neoliberal education system are the ones who can access and absorb the information given to them by their teachers. This links to the transmission model (Smith, 1996, 2000) because the manner in which the banking concept is implemented is through the delivery of knowledge. The children who are most successful in terms of measurement and testing are the ones who respond best to Freire's description of the "banking concept" (p60).

However, there are alternative ways to view the neoliberal influences in education. In terms of the curriculum, it is not just the way it is taught that is affected. Whilst Freire (1970) and Goodson (2014) expressed concerns about the delivery of knowledge, Aeppli (2001) and Apple (2004) considered the content of the curriculum. Children also need to develop specific skills and knowledge which are appropriate for the workforce (Aeppli, 2001) to succeed in a neoliberal ethos. As described in section 2.7.1, those individuals who are considered employable will need to demonstrate particular skills required by those who employ them. Apple (2004) described how a requirement of schools is "to contribute to the maximization of the production of the technical knowledge also needed by the economy" (p59). He also stated that the content of the curriculum includes not just specific technical knowledge required by future employees to maintain the production of goods, but that the curriculum also perpetuates the neoliberal ideology. The content and structure of the curriculum will not only give children the skills they need, it will also shape their attitudes and dispositions that "embody ideological rules that both preserve and enhance an existing set of structural relations" (p62). Children are taught that marketisation, competition, and economic and global power is something to aspire to. Apple clarified that such messages are imparted through what he described as a "hidden" (p13) or informal curriculum. There is no doubt for Apple that "curriculum theory and development, have been strongly connected to and influenced by economic needs and changes" (2004, p65).

A neoliberal ideology which has shaped expectations for workforce labour in society, and the curriculum in schools, has serious implications for children identified as having learning difficulties. It is those children, who are not able to learn, acquire specific skills or contribute to school assessment data who may not be supported effectively within a neoliberal education system. This will be considered in the next section.

### **2.7.3 Neoliberalism and SEND/SEBD**

I have explored how neoliberal ideology has been seen to influence the education system. Aeppli (2001) and Goodson (2014) argued that the performative culture in schools has led to increased expectations upon children to produce attainment at levels which would demonstrate their school's effectiveness in teaching and learning. Apple (2004) described how specific technical skills were required to prepare children for their futures as employable members of the workforce. Each of these elements in the current education system will have an impact on what, and how, children learn. The introduction of targets, subject-specific testing and progress reports are now typical practices used to evaluate how good a school is (De Lissovoy, 2013). Such practices have led to tensions and challenges for teachers and children when those children are identified as having difficulties in learning and these are discussed in this section.

Smith and Douglas' (2014) scrutinised international assessment data pertaining to test results of pupils with SEN. They identified that children identified as having SEN were the "group who may often be the least academically successful in school" (p 444). They argued that the implications of this were threefold. Firstly, schools could attribute blame to those children whose assessment results could jeopardise the school's overall performance. Secondly, the desire to include those children within typical school structures could be reduced because of the risk they posed to accountability; and thirdly, the pressures upon the children to perform could result in withdrawal and dropout from school provision. Therefore, whole school assessment results

could be affected by those children unable to learn at the same pace as their peers, and/or who are not able to complete tests successfully.

The concern that the inclusion of children identified as having SEBD may impact upon school results is significant (Goodman and Burton, 2010). Children who do, or are likely, to exhibit disruptive behaviour not only affect their own learning, but the learning of their peers in the classroom (Soles, Bloom, Heath and Karagiannakis, 2008). As a result of this disruption, it is possible that the assessment scores will not just be lower for those children identified with learning difficulties, but for those around them; this will have even greater impact on school results (Visser and Stokes, 2003)

Burton, Bartlett and de Cuevas (2009) carried out a study with twenty professionals responsible for supporting learners identified as having SEBD. Interviews and analysis of school policy documents were conducted with the focus being current policy and provision. Their small-scale, yet in depth research provided insight into how professionals, including teachers, felt about the tensions between learning, progress and the needs of some children.

Some respondents felt that there was an overemphasis from central government on academic standards and results, particularly at the highest grades, which made it difficult for practitioners to motivate young people who no matter how hard they tried would not reach the benchmark standard ... there was also a perception that individual teachers felt inhibited from adapting the class to meet the needs of young people with BESD, for fear of failing to meet performance targets. (Burton, Bartlett and de Cuevas, 2009, p148).

However, their research also identified contradictions in responses from the teachers as some felt that the standards agenda would lead to exclusion of some pupils from the learning, whereas others felt it would be a way of raising attainment. Troman (2008) when researching the perspectives of teachers working in 'performative school cultures' commented on the teachers' worries about children who were not attaining higher scores in the tests.

They were sometimes anxious about the negative emotional impact on pupils who they knew could not 'perform' and some suggested

colleagues had falsified scores to look as though improvement had taken place. (Troman, 2008, p627).

This indicated that the challenges of demonstrating attainment and progress were causing dilemmas and concerns for teachers to the extent that they even considered changing the scores. Changing scores to make it look as if progress is taking place suggests that the impact an accountability and performativity led system is having on them is significant and merits further discussion. In section 3.3, I explore in more detail the impact such a context appears to be having on teachers' roles and the feelings they have about what they do.

In this section I have described how neoliberalism has influenced the policies and practices within the education system. I have shown how the expectations for achievement and progress in schools impacts on learning for children, and for those identified as having SEBD in particular.

## **2.8 Summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of the models of disability and the perspectives of teachers who work within the field of special educational needs. It considers the way in which teachers seem to position those children they consider to have SEBD. I have discussed the pervasiveness of a neoliberal ideology and the impact this has had on policy and curriculum and shown how this has led to a rapidly changing context in which teachers and children work and learn. I have demonstrated how the aims and objectives of successive governments have brought about policies which have led to changes in practice and expectations.

In the next chapter, the consequences of policy, curriculum and the resulting expectations on teachers are considered. The chapter explores research that has investigated the stresses and pressures that are being placed upon mainstream primary school teachers. The implications for teachers of

emotional labour, performativity, accountability and professional identity are reviewed.

## **Chapter 3: Teacher performativity, emotional labour and identity**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, consideration is given to the literature pertaining to the lives and professional identity of teachers working in mainstream primary schools. It focuses particularly on research which has foregrounded teachers' views on their experiences, and examine the emotional dimension of working within, what have been described as, challenging circumstances. Ball's research on performativity (2003) is used to provide a context for how teachers feel about their role in the context of neoliberalism and why they feel their workload is challenging.

### **3.2 Emotional labour in teaching**

This chapter begins with an overview of research relating to what has been termed 'emotional labour'. References to teachers' perspectives, feelings and responses to their professional role are used throughout the remainder of this study and these are influenced by their emotional responses to what they do (Hargreaves, 1998). Before proceeding, it is useful to explore how emotional labour has been understood, and how it is relevant to this discussion of teachers' experiences of working with children categorised as having SEBD.

Emotional labour, originally introduced by Hochschild (1983) in her sociological studies of human emotions, is used to describe the range of emotions that professionals experience and work with. The term, predominantly used in studies of social care and education, encompasses the emotional experiences that arise in caring and teaching roles. Harris and White (2013) referred to the challenges professional carers and educators face when supporting individuals. They identified the difficulties that can be experienced when nurses, social workers or teachers are faced with expressions of anger or distress by those who they support. Additionally, Harris and White (2103) refer to the ways in

which professionals need to control their own emotional responses to the individuals they are working with.

Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006) carried out a small-scale action research study with one teacher, Lynn, and her teacher educator. They looked at Lynn's expectation of, and commitment to, being a "caring teacher" (p121) and the way this impacted on her practice. They identified that teaching did, typically, involve emotional feelings whilst carrying out the role. However, they felt that the emotions experienced by a teacher became "emotional labour when the teacher engaged in efforts to modify and control negative emotions for the purpose of expressing only those emotions that are socially acceptable" (Isenbarger and Zembylas, 2006, p123). Therefore, the teacher may feel that she has to modify or reduce her emotional responses to the children so that they do not become aware of the impact they are having on their teachers.

Kinman, Wray and Strange (2011) completed a large-scale study on emotional labour in teaching and built on the research findings by Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006). They analysed questionnaire responses by six hundred and twenty-eight teachers and made links between "feelings of personal accomplishment and job satisfaction" (2011, p843). Kinman, Wray and Strange (2011) also identified that the experiences of the suppression of teachers' emotions in the classroom could lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout. This, they argued, meant that professional performance and well-being could also be negatively affected.

In terms of emotional labour and teaching children identified with SEN or SEBD, Mackenzie (2012) offered her insights. Her study of teachers of SEN and attrition rates in the profession showed that emotional labour within the day-to-day work they did was common. Her work with focus groups comprising of teachers, trainee teachers and teaching assistants throughout England identified that working with children with SEN produced strong emotional reactions in those professionals working with them. She did, however, acknowledge that whilst negative responses as a result of emotional labour were found in her analyses, the overriding emotion that teachers referred to was



'love'. The teachers talked about their love for the job and also for the children and this indicated that teachers felt a complex array of positive and negative emotions as a result of supporting learners with SEN. Mackenzie (2012) also identified that "the ability to plate-spin and ball-juggle in a time of constant policy change" (p1080) was a significant finding in her research.

The implications of policy change and the implications for teachers' emotions is also considered by Rayner and Espinoza (2016). Rayner and Espinoza (2016) argued that their research is distinctive because it uses emotional labour as a lens by which to consider the changes to the public sector, and more specifically to teaching in primary and secondary schools in England. They confirmed that minimal research into teachers' experiences has been carried out to date, and called for greater focus in future studies. Their qualitative study of sixteen teachers in two schools identified complexities in responses in the same way that Mackenzie (2012) did. They also identified that the teachers felt the need to control their emotions (emotional labour) in response to the expectations placed upon them by managerial colleagues and parents. The teachers described how they were now faced with the professional demands of working within a "results-driven culture ... [and] felt governed by the customer-focused service relationships with stakeholders such as parents" (Rayner and Espinoza, 2016, p2267). This indicates that the pressures of emotional labour have extended from teachers' work with children in their classrooms, to colleagues and parents; thereby placing even greater strains on their emotional experiences.

In this section, I have described the phenomenon of emotional labour and shared examples of studies that have explored how this has been identified within education. I now consider research which focuses on teachers' perspectives of their roles. This incorporates discussion of the impact that neoliberal education policies, as discussed in Section 2.7, have had on what teachers do. It also considers ways in which the emotional responses of teachers influence how they feel about what they do.

### **3.3 Teachers' perspectives on their professional roles**

In exploring teachers' perspectives, it is helpful to reflect on the growing body of research that has arisen since the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act (HM Gov, 1988) because this has identified the ways in which teachers' views, practices and experiences have been influenced by successive policy reforms. This section focuses on teachers' roles, the expectations of them by policy makers and the impact these have on how they regard themselves as teachers. There are many implications for teachers in mainstream primary schools who do and do not work with children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Therefore, generic themes are considered first, and then more specific aspects concerned with SEBD are discussed.

#### **3.3.1 The 'performativity' of teachers**

Ball has conducted several studies into the impact of policy and expectations on teachers over the last thirty years. His work is pertinent to this study as it provides a framework with which to consider teachers' experiences of teaching in an education system shaped by neoliberalism.

Ball (2003) recognised that the market driven approach, as discussed in Section 2.7, has permeated from business and economic institutions to education. Much of his research has focused on the way in which a neoliberalist ideology has shaped teachers' practice because it produces expectations of high levels of performance, from both children and teachers. His critiques of policy within educational contexts (e.g., 1997, 2003, 2012, 2013 and 2016) have identified that teachers' roles are shaped and re-created in direct response to the rapidly changing policy driven education system in England. He stated that the way teachers perceive their roles has a direct effect on their self-awareness and actions (2003). In *The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity* (2003) Ball described performativity as,

... a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change – based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). The performances (of individual subjects or organizations) serve as measure of productivity or output, or displays of ‘quality’, or ‘moments’ of promotion or inspection. As such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organization within a field of judgement (2003, p216).

His argument here is that productivity shapes both self-belief and the external perceptions of an individual’s effectiveness. This is fundamental in understanding and appreciating the actions of teachers. He recognised that teachers self-evaluate their professional efficacies. They base their personal perspectives on elements such as commitment and belief in what they do, and through their own evaluations of their emotional well-being. The links to emotional labour (Isenbarger and Zembylas, 2006) and feelings about having a duty of care for others, in this case the children in their class, are evident. Ball (2003) explained that he was most interested in how teachers perceived themselves in terms of their relationships with children and colleagues. He concluded that the expectations placed on professional practice and the way in which these expectations shape and change what a teacher does and how they feel about what they do, presents ethical dilemmas. Ball developed Lyotard’s (1984) description of the ‘terrors’ of performativity. He identified that the ‘terrors’ that teachers feel in their work occur as a result of having to prove that they are effective in terms of their professional performance (Ball, 2003). The means by which performativity is measured are quantitative; they involve judgement and measurement of what teachers have taught and children have learned, for example through the use of checklists of criteria and percentages of attainment. However, the work of the teacher is complex and incorporates personal and human actions. Ball argues that showing love, commitment, relationships and the breadth of non-quantifiable provision that teachers are involved in every day becomes problematic when there is such an emphasis on comparative measures. He says, “central to its [performativity’s] functioning is the translation of complex social processes and events into simple figures or categories of judgement” (2003, p217). Terrors also arise from the criteria used for judgement. Teachers have no autonomy over the elements of their practice

that are measured and assessed and they find that their beliefs about what is important in terms of their performance and professionalism are not considered,

Who is it that determines what is to count as a valuable, effective or satisfactory performance and what measures or indicators are considered valid? Typically, at least in the UK, these struggles are currently highly individualized as teachers, as ethical subjects, find their values challenged or displaced by the terrors of performativity. (Ball, 2003, p216).

Teachers, rather than experiencing autonomy in their work, now find that they face ethical dilemmas in doing what they consider to be the 'right thing' for the child and their teaching. Ball identified that teachers feel that these ethical practices are considered to be less important than meeting performative expectations; "effectivity rather than honesty is most valued in a performative regime" (Ball, 2003, p226).

In his later critiques of performativity (2012 and 2015) Ball discussed the way in which teachers' sense of self has been subjected to the controls and powers emanating from neoliberal influenced policies. Ball's (2012) reflections on his own career teaching in higher education identified a duality in the teaching persona; one aspect being that which is open to the quantitative influences of a marketised practice; and the other, as someone who refutes the measurable forces placed upon him. He developed this view in his article on teacher subjectivity (2015) and broadened the idea of duality to incorporate teachers in schools. He argued that teachers who were able to show flexibility, productivity and a willingness to change their practices would be more likely to accept the changes put upon them. However, those teachers who were not able to accept the changes and who resist performativity, measurability and rigorous control would struggle. Pignatelli (1993) identified that the resistant teachers are "taking up the challenge of creatively and courageously authoring one's ethical self" (p158). Yet his descriptions of the ways in which teachers respond to neoliberalism is more complex than that. There are those professionals who choose one route or the other (accept or resist), and there are those who demonstrate acceptance, but resist when those in control are not looking.

However, there is no doubt that “it is a struggle over and against what it is we have become, and it is that we do not want to be” (Ball, 2015, p15).

In this section I have reviewed relevant critiques by Ball on the expectations placed upon teachers as a result of the neoliberal education system. I have shown how the need for teachers to re-evaluate what they do and how they see themselves is central to Ball’s argument. In the subsequent sections, I discuss the literature pertaining to the activities and tasks expected of teachers in the performative regime. Their professional roles, which have had to change as a result of the performance-led structures and practices, are associated with increased workloads. I also describe how performativity is linked to systems of accountability. I then conclude with a return to the critiques by Ball in a discussion on the implications of such developments on teachers’ professional identity.

### **3.3.2 Changing expectations on teachers’ professional practice**

Nias’ (1989) longitudinal study of teachers’ perspectives on their roles, the highlights and the challenges, and their recognition of the links between their professional and personal lives is a widely-cited work. Nias interviewed teachers in the 1970s and 1980s to find out how they felt about their role. She identified that teachers talked predominantly about their desires to improve children’s lives and their chances in their future lives. This, she explained, resulted in teachers feeling concerned about how effective they were as teachers. The teachers described how they felt they needed more training and support and that they sometimes felt isolated in their work. They described their ideas of what a teacher was like and did in their professional capacity and how this did – and did not – always match what they felt it should be. Nias (1989) recognised that teachers had clear ideas about what an effective teacher was like. Her study provided an insight into how teachers felt at a time of political upheaval. At the time of her study, policies were being introduced that have subsequently been seen as reflecting neoliberal ideologies (Davies, 2014). As a result of the timing of her study, it was possible for Nias to gain a valuable

insight into the teachers' views as the expectations of them were changing. Her study has also been used as a gauge in teachers' views for subsequent studies (Nias, 1995; Osborn, McNess and Broadfoot, 2000; Ballet and Kelchtermans, 2007; Passy, 2013).

The expectation that teachers would structure, plan and teach from a newly introduced national curriculum in England (DES, 1988) gave many opportunities for researchers to question the impact this had on what teachers were doing. Osborn, McNess and Broadfoot (2000) in their research for *What Teachers Do* (2000), a longitudinal project focusing on Primary, Assessment, Curriculum and Experience (PACE), interviewed and observed teachers working in the 1990s. They identified how teachers felt about how the new curriculum and assessment processes introduced in the Education Act (HM Gov, 1989) affected them. Their results were, to quote Nias' review of their work,

a vivid and disturbing picture of teachers' and pupils' evolving experience of the new requirements for curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and of the cumulative effects of this experience upon their sense of autonomy, their motivation and their attitudes to, on the one hand, teaching and, on the other, learning." (Osborn, McNess and Broadfoot, 2000, p xi).

In *Insights into Teachers' Thinking and Practice*, Day, Pope and Denicolo (1990) presented a series of case studies in which teachers talked about how their roles were influenced by the pressures arising from changing expectations in policy.

The studies above provide examples of changing expectations as a result of the changing policies imposed by the government in the 1980s. Such changes have continued into the new millennium and continue to invite scrutiny of the impact that changing expectations have on practice and professional identity.

Troman (2008) in *Primary teacher identity, commitment and career in performative school cultures* identified the increasing expectations upon teachers to meet policy directives in an education system influenced by neoliberalism (described in the previous chapter). Troman, like Ball (2003),

talked of 'performativity' in which teachers are required to demonstrate their, and the children's, achievements. These are measured and evaluated through the use of "target setting; Ofsted inspections; school league tables constructed from pupil test scores; performance management; [and] performance related pay" (Troman, 2008, p620). Troman's research with 37 teachers in 6 primary schools concluded that the teaching role has changed as a result and that this has had an impact upon how the teachers feel about what they do. Troman argued that the nature of teaching in schools where performativity is the driving factor has also changed the way teacher identities are formed,

Schools, like other organisations in post-industrial society, are no longer bureaucratic institutions offering bureaucratic careers in which individuals invest their 'selves' for a working lifetime. Work also may no longer be the major area of human activity around which personal and occupational identities are formed. In this respect then, the primary schools of our research can be said to have undergone a major change in the identities, commitments and careers of those working in them (Troman, 2008, p632-633).

The implications this has on the development of professional identity for teachers working in the current education system is a key factor in this study and is discussed in greater detail in Section 3.5. Troman also identified that changes in the teacher's role as a result of expectations driven by performativity has an impact on the way professionalism is conceptualised.

Evans (2011) reflected on changes in expectations brought about by policy. She explored the way in which developments were impacting on teachers' sense of professionalism and the way in which expectations on teacher professionalism would have to change due to the changes in education policy (DfE, 2010a). Her policy review of the White Paper outlining the Coalition government's intended agenda for educational reform (DfE, 2010a) critiqued the proposed Teacher Standards, which would require teachers to meet a series of statutory obligations (discussed in greater detail below). Evans claimed that such standards would explicitly shape the professionalism of teachers and would be used to ensure that government planned teaching structures were implemented. As these are implemented through government diktats, she

explained, teachers' professionalism would be "externally imposed" (2011, p854).

Evans defined professionalism in relation to three components which are paraphrased here: the behavioural component which encompasses the actions and practices of what teachers do; the attitudinal component, which encapsulates how they feel about what they do; and the intellectual component, the understanding and knowledge they have about what they do. Therefore, in order for governments to directly change and control professionalism (the status and identity of teachers), each of Evans' (2011) three components would need to be addressed. The most recent implementation of the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012) appeared to attempt to do exactly this. The standards by which teachers are statutorily held accountable consist of two parts, teaching, and personal and professional conduct. They are used as an assessment tool with trainee teachers to ensure they meet the expectations for qualified teacher status (QTS). They are also used as a measure of teachers' efficacy by managers and inspectors throughout their careers. Evans (2011) described how concern or failure to meet each of the standards could result in more frequent inspections to ensure that teachers, and the schools within which they are employed, are continually held accountable and improving. The minutiae of the teaching and planning processes are identified in Part One and whilst each aspect describes practice that ensures the "highest possible standards" (DfE, 2012) they may detract from the fundamental role of what it is to be a teacher. Evans (2011) concluded her review with a warning about the way in which teachers may respond to such imposed professionalism in which she believed that whilst teachers may perform and meet the standards at a surface level, this does not necessarily mean that their attitudes and beliefs will change:

The professionalism demanded or required by the coalition government ... is likely to represent an even stronger focus on what teachers do in terms of their behaviour—how they teach, applying the narrowest of definitions of teaching as potentially observable interaction with pupils—rather than on how they think and what attitudes they hold (including ... morale, job satisfaction and motivation). (2011, p 868).



Exploring teachers' experiences of changing expectations, Day, Elliot and Kington (2005), carried out a small-scale study of twenty primary and secondary school teachers working in England and Australia. Their interviews with the teachers, all of whom had more than twenty-five years teaching experience, identified that teachers felt that they were not able to develop relationships with their pupils. The teachers attributed this to their inability to meet their needs due to the increasing levels of bureaucratic tasks they were expected to complete. A proportion of the job now requires teachers to collate and demonstrate evidence that proves their compliance to the standards. This requires time which may previously have been spent working with the children. Ballet and Ketchtermans (2009) summed this up in their critique of teachers' workloads,

... teachers are increasingly subject to scrutiny and accountability ... which coincides with growing external pressures, due to the fact that teachers must perform an increasing number of 'imposed' tasks for which they have insufficient time and resources. This restricts the teachers' opportunities for creativity in the classroom and for the development of collegial relationships" (p1151).

However, despite descriptions of teachers' resistance to the expectations placed upon them (Troman, 2008, and Helsing, 2006), Evans (2011) warned that teachers may not be best placed to make judgements about policy directives and expectations placed upon them. She asserted that because teachers do not have the vision and broader view required for the development of an education system they are not able to evaluate policy. Goodson (2014) hotly contested this, and through his analysis of many statements published by teaching unions in response to recent government directives, confirmed that he was not alone in his assertion that policy makers also lack the vision and knowledge expected of them.

Education researchers and education professors are summarily consigned to the dustbin of history ... the Minister for Education has publicly derided educational experts with wide experiences of educational practices and curriculum design. Any criticism is met with name calling ... it is the government minister ... without educational experience (2014, p14-15).

The way in which expectations of professional practice have changed has been discussed in this section. Such changes have led to increased pressures on teachers' workloads, both in mainstream schools, and in classrooms which incorporate learners who have been identified as having SEBD. These aspects are discussed in the next two sections.

### **3.3.3 Teachers' workloads in mainstream schools**

In 2010, the English government carried out a survey regarding teachers' workloads (DfE, 2010b). Teachers were asked to complete questionnaires that focused on what they did in their professional teaching role. A total of 1244 teachers from 164 mainstream schools responded to the survey. The findings indicated that full time primary school teachers were working in excess of fifty hours per week and that this had an impact upon their personal and professional lives (DfE, 2010b). The report acknowledged that average working hours had increased annually over the previous five years and that this was a common reason given by teachers for leaving the profession. In 2014, a survey was carried out by the National Union of Teachers, again focusing on their workload. The survey showed that the teachers' concerns expressed in 2014 (NUT, 2014) were consistent with those stated in 2010 and that their situation in terms of job satisfaction and workload had got worse. The three main findings named excessive marking, data entry and analysis, and Ofsted preparation, as causes for concern and that this had increased attrition rates. The survey identified that 90% of teachers had considered leaving teaching in the previous two years and that 96.5% confirmed that their workload had a negative impact on their personal and family lives. The survey demonstrated that the vast majority of teachers felt that things had not improved since the 2010 survey.

Teachers' workloads have also been a focus for researchers in the first part of the twenty-first century. Ballet and Kelchtermans (2009) interviewed four teachers from four different schools and produced case studies which focused on workloads. They concluded that workloads were increasing significantly in response to changes in policy and expectations. This was further compounded

by the professionally driven sense of responsibility to the children they taught, “because of their moral commitment to their pupils (“doing justice to the children’s educational needs”), the experience of intensification is emotionally charged” (2009, p1156). Therefore, the emotional implications of duty and care for the children were impacting on the teachers’ practices and workload (Mackenzie, 2012; Kinman, Wray and Strange, 2011). Galton and MacBeath (2008) also researched teachers’ views about workload and professional pressures. Their research began with an analysis of the findings from a quantitative survey carried out by the accountants PriceWaterhouseCooper (2001) on teacher workload. This DfES commissioned survey of 102 schools stated that teachers were working excessive hours. The survey brought about new guidelines for schools from the DfES (2003) aimed to tackle teacher workload. Galton and MacBeath (2008) sought to identify the detail behind the data in the survey and completed two qualitative studies over a five-year span, one before the workload guidance (DfES, 2003a) was implemented and one after; they compared the perspectives of 30 teachers from five schools in England. From the interviews conducted they produced three case studies which they felt encapsulated the key themes in their findings. They identified that high levels of stress and excessive workloads continued to be a concern for teachers both before and after the implementation of the teacher workload guidance (DfES, 2003a). Galton and MacBeath (2008) stated that the DfES guidance appeared to have no impact, and that teachers had reported that they were working longer hours than they had been when interviewed five years earlier. The key area of concern was that the teachers felt they were working to extremes because they had a duty of care to the children which they tried to maintain whilst also meeting bureaucratic expectations. They also cited the challenges of implementing regularly changing policies and the difficulties of teaching a wide range of learning needs. This research, in addition to teachers’ letters to publications such as the *Times Educational Supplement* (Exley, 2014) and *The Economist* (Colling, 2016) indicate that teachers still feel that their workloads are overwhelming.

The workload pressures on teachers may be greater still for those working with children identified as having social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and this is discussed in the next section.

### **3.3.4 Increased pressures on teachers working with children identified as having SEBD**

The previous section explored how teachers in mainstream primary schools face increased pressures in terms of their role and professionalism. The pressures may intensify for those teaching children identified as having SEBD in mainstream primary classrooms. Jones, West and Stevens (2006) identified that the existing pressures to teach within an attainment and accountability-focused system are even greater when also meeting the challenges of teaching students who are unable to access and respond to the prescribed curriculum. Poulou (2005) talked of the dilemma faced by teachers who need to distinguish between meeting statutory levels of progress for all children whilst also trying to support children with specific difficulties to learn the skills needed to function successfully in schools and society. Syrnyk (2012) described the vision of the “nurture teacher” (p149) who is able to meet the needs associated with SEBD. The distinguishing characteristics of such a teacher put personal development of the children before the academic; where the need for empathy, self-awareness, openness and trustworthiness are vital (Syrnyk, 2012). Vogt described these characteristics as an integral part of being a “caring teacher” (2010, p262). However, Ball recognised in his studies on teacher performativity that “performance has no room for caring” because teachers are too busy with the pressures of meeting the targets set for them (2003, p224). Teachers who may consider themselves to be caring and nurturing (Syrnyk, 2012) can no longer perpetuate this part of their role due to the pressures on them to meet performance-related goals and demonstrate consistent levels of progress by the children. In more specific terms, this raises the concern that the current education system does not allow teachers the opportunity or flexibility to meet the needs of children identified as having SEBD, or more generically, SEN. Yet, all teachers, regardless of the needs of the children they teach have the same

expectations placed upon them. They are measured and judged based on rates of progress by children. This, as explored in the workload surveys, contributes significantly to the stresses they experience.

### **3.4 Accountability and performance in teaching**

In Section 3.3.2 I described how the expectations upon teachers to meet the prescribed levels of accountability and practice, shaped by a measurement-focused system, have increased over the last three decades. I discussed in Section 3.3.1 Ball's works on performativity (Ball, 2003, 2012, 2013, 2015) which highlighted changing expectations within education and made the link between the government-led drive for accountability of teachers' performance and teachers' perceptions of their role and professional identity. In this section, I consider how performativity can affect the way teachers regard the purpose of what they do.

#### **3.4.1 Meeting the Teachers' Standards**

Accountability is now a fundamental part of the teacher's duty. The Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012) refer to the importance of achieving each of the Standards to demonstrate compliance and the required levels of performance. To ensure teachers are meeting the expectations of the eight Standards they are regularly evaluated and observed, internally by members of a school's senior management team, and externally by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). One aspect of the Standards in addition to those focusing on teaching and learning, is that of professionalism. Part 2 (DfE, 2012) refers to Personal and Professional conduct and makes explicit reference to teachers meeting policy requirements,

Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices ... [and] must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities (DfE, 2012, p14).

In order to gain and maintain qualified teacher status, teachers must demonstrate that they meet the Standards and ensure that their ongoing professional development reflects these criteria. At the same time as the introduction of the *Teachers' Standards*, the *Statutory Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations* (HMGov, 2012a) were also implemented and were supported by new guidance, *Teacher appraisal and capability: A model policy for schools* (2012b). This policy clarified the requirements for compliance, review and assessment of teachers annually, and throughout their careers, and the links to performance-related pay were made explicit. Teachers were now aware that their performance was linked to their appraisals and that this would have a direct impact on their pay. A failure to provide data which demonstrated that the children were making progress as a result of their teaching could lead to concerns about their professional capabilities. These requirements, as the next section explores, may have implications for teachers' professional identity.

### **3.5 Teachers' professional identity**

In this section I consider some of the literature pertaining to teachers' professional identity. I first provide an overview of how identity can be conceptualised in relation to this study. I then describe how researchers (Day and Kington, 2008; Osborn, McNess and Broadfoot, 2000; and Kelchtermans, 2009) have categorised the way in which teachers seem to describe and develop their professional identities. I then consider how teachers construct their professional identities based on the feedback they receive, from children and colleagues, and through their own reflections of how effective they consider themselves to be in their work.

#### **3.5.1 Conceptualising identity**

In the next section I reflect on the literature pertaining to the professional identities of teachers. I consider how their experiences and working contexts

are fundamental to the way in which teachers see themselves. First, however, it is helpful to discuss how 'identity' has been conceptualised in this thesis.

Benwell and Stokoe (2006) considered the different contexts within which "identity work is being done" (p5). They "understand the term 'identity' in its broadest sense, in terms of *who people are to each other* and how different kinds of identities are produced in spoken interaction and written texts" (p6). Benwell and Stokoe apply different discourse analyses to demonstrate how individuals, specifically researchers, study the development and construction of identity.

Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte and Cain (1998) recognised that identity is a construct of what individuals present to others,

People tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are. These self-understandings, especially those with strong emotional resonance for the teller, are what we refer to as identities (p3).

Holland, et al. (1998) described how identities are created through discourse (see Section 2.4.3) whereby an individual's talk and action is shaped by the identity they have of themselves. This, in turn, also shapes their identity. That is, we behave in certain ways because that is who we think we are; but these behaviours also help to shape our construction of our identities.

Benwell and Stokoe's (2006) decision to present their discussion on the construction of identities through a range of different contexts is important; the social experiences have an impact on identity and discourse. In this study, I focus on the professional identity of teachers. I develop an understanding of the way in which I perceived they have constructed them by listening to, and analysing, the narratives they shared with me. In the next section I consider some of the literature which focuses specifically on teacher identity.

### **3.5.2 Constructing teachers' identities**

Dilemmas arising from trying to meet the requirements of policy and the needs of children, may have an impact on the way in which teachers regard what they do. Day and Kington (2008) made the correlation between a teacher's work, their sense of their own effectiveness and their professional identity. They categorised identity into three parts: professional, socially located, and personal, and explored how "teachers may experience tensions within and between these three dimensions at any given time" (p11). Therefore, how a teacher sees their role can have an impact on how they describe their professional identity. Osborn, McNess and Broadfoot (2000) recognised, in their reflections on teachers' shared stories of their practice, that this does not just affect how they see themselves but also how they act in the classroom. They made links between the teachers' feelings and their actions, "as they themselves felt more externally controlled they were also completed to exert control over pupil experience in the classroom" (p49).

The need to demonstrate greater levels of control has particular significance for teachers working with children identified as having SEBD. I have demonstrated in Chapter 2 how those children may face difficulties in terms of attainment and progress because the curriculum and teaching approaches are not appropriate. Jones, West and Steven (2006) argued that teachers are under pressure to produce high attainment results. The pressure on them leads to increased expectations of the children in their classes and the result is that pressure is then put upon children to demonstrate progress. This also means that children need to conform to the classroom rules for behaviour as inappropriate behaviour is distracting and will prevent learning. Jones, West and Steven (2006) stated that this expectation then "leads to higher levels of stress which ultimately contributes to the attrition rate" (p84). Therefore, teachers' perceptions of how effective they are in the classroom not only depend on their view and interpretation of their role, it also directly impacts on their actions; if this has a negative effect on their professional identity then they may find the desire to continue teaching diminished.



Kelchtermans (2009) recognised two dimensions when looking at the way teachers form their professional identity. The first dimension is built through perceptions of how they think other people regard them. This *self-image* can be shaped by the feedback they receive: so, praise and admiration would result in a positive image. Therefore, to attribute this to the teachers working with students who are not able to achieve, it is possible that they will receive negative responses. These responses may come from the students themselves and from other students (and their parents) who are also learning in the class affected by the disruption. The second of Kelchtermans's dimensions is one of *self-esteem* whereby the teachers develop their self-awareness and identity based on how effective they feel they are in their work. The impact of the measures of competence should be considered here: the scrutiny of test results, inspections and the ability to achieve the professional targets set for them may have a direct impact upon their *self-esteem*.

Hargreaves (1998) considered how one aspect of the teachers' role involves being an advocate for the children. In his review of literature focusing on emotions in teaching he identified that the links between teaching, emotions and professional identity were inextricably linked. He stated that not only do teachers perceive that they are responsible for the children they teach, but this impacts on how they regard their professional identity and how they view government policy and expectations. If teachers feel that what they must do, according to policy, is not relevant or appropriate to meet the needs of the children they teach then they will become resistant, negative or disaffected as professionals. Hargreaves (1998) identified that a mismatch between what teachers feel they should do and what they feel they have to do is directly linked to their emotional well-being as professionals. He argued that emotion within teaching seems to underpin professionalism and identity. In his research, he concluded that,

teachers' emotional commitments and connections to students energized and articulated everything these teachers did: including how they taught, how they planned, and the structures in which they preferred to teach (Hargreaves, 1998, p850).

Teachers, in conversation about their work, reflected on feelings of joy, happiness and pride when they felt successful when teaching, and despair, sadness and disappointment when they considered things to have gone wrong (Nias, 1989; Osborn, McNess and Broadfoot, 2000; Gray, 2002). The links between teaching and emotion are complex as demonstrated in Section 3.2 on emotional labour.

The existence of emotion in teaching is seen as being even more evident for teachers who are supporting learners with SEBD. Center and Steventon (2001) considered the levels of stress teachers in the United States of America said they felt when implementing their 'EBD teacher stressors questionnaire'. They drew links between emotional responses and teachers' experiences of working within high or low levels of stressful situations in the classroom. Center and Steventon concluded that it was vital for teachers to manage their stress levels. They felt teachers could do this if they increased their levels of self-awareness and reduced their own emotional responses to the children they worked with. Whilst the correlation between reduced emotional response and reduced stress levels may seem reasonable, Hargreaves (1998), Hanks (2002) and Day and Kington (2008) recognised that controlling teachers own emotional responses is not always possible due to the high levels of emotion that they invest in their professional roles. Syrnyk (2012) advised that teachers need to "recognise the need to protect their own emotional stability by monitoring their own states, in relation to the emotional states of the children" (2012, p150). This may be particularly necessary, though difficult, for teachers working with children who may be in states of high emotional arousal themselves. The extent to which this is achievable, or whether teachers may have the opportunity to do it, is questionable, particularly when the claims for excessive workloads, burdensome bureaucratic expectations and limited time (Jones, West and Stevens, 2006, Day, Elliot and Kington, 2005, and Poulou, 2005) add to the expectations on their professional duties.

In this section, I have reflected on how the emotional and professional pressures teachers experience can influence their professional identities. There is a link between a positive regard for what they do and positive emotional

responses. Likewise, those teachers who feel overwhelmed and unhappy about what they do are more likely to have negative responses. It is important to acknowledge this as it may have a direct correlation with how teachers perceive the context and concept of their role.

In the next section I describe how the aim and sub questions of this study have arisen in light of the literature discussed in this Chapter, and in Chapter 2.

### 3.6 Aim of the study and sub questions

In this section I describe how the aim for this study, and each of my sub questions, built upon previous research and literature as discussed in this and the previous chapter. I also refer to the methods which I felt were most appropriate to enable me to develop answers to the questions.

<b>Aim of the study</b>	
To find out the views and feelings of mainstream primary school teachers who support children identified with social and emotional behavioural difficulties about their roles.	
<b>Sub questions</b>	
1.	How do expectations in relation to policy and curriculum impact on teachers' feelings about what they do?
2.	What is it like to support learners who are identified as having SEBD?
3.	How do the additional needs of children identified as having SEBD impact on the teachers' feelings and experiences?
4.	How do the experiences of supporting children identified as having SEBD in mainstream classrooms influence how teachers feel about the expectations placed upon them?
5.	How do these experiences influence how teachers feel about what they do, professionally and/or personally?

Table 4.1: Aims and sub questions.

The first sub question listed in Table 4.1 focused on the teachers' feelings about what they did in their role in response to policy and curriculum expectations. As discussed in Section 2.6 the challenges of teaching within an education system which has been subjected to changing policy and curricula over the last four decades has required teachers to change their practice and implement new expectations. My first sub question addressed how teachers felt about the impact the current expectations placed upon them.

The second question provided a focus for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. This links to the literature discussed in Sections 2.3 and 2.4.

The third question sought to gain an insight into how working with children identified as having SEBD made them feel. I was interested in if, and if so how, the teachers in my study categorised the children they taught. The discussion in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 are pertinent to this question.

The fourth question considered what it was like to teach children who exhibited disruptive and challenging behaviours when they were being taught alongside their peers who were not considered to have additional needs. Building on the literature that identified the pressures teachers faced when teaching in a performative-led education system (sub question one) and combining this with the pressures of teaching SEBD (sub questions two and three), I wanted to explore how they felt the pressures and expectations placed upon them had an impact on what they did on a day-to-day basis and how they felt about it. This question links to sections 3.3 and 3.4 in addition to those relevant for questions 1, 2 and 3.

The fifth and final sub question provided a focus on professional identity and how this related to their personal feelings and experiences about teaching. I was interested in how they saw themselves as teachers in the current education system in relation to the literature discussed in Section 3.5.

These sub questions provided the structure for the study. They enabled me to develop and organise what I wanted to find out, and to begin to identify an

appropriate methodology and associated methods. In the next chapter I describe my early methodological considerations and how these were developed in response to my experiences of and reflections on the pilot study.

### **3.7 Summary**

In this chapter I have drawn together the concepts of performativity in teaching, emotional labour and identity. I have considered Ball's concerns about the ways in which a performance-led education system causes conflict for teachers. The possibility that the education system could be seen as either a moral, public service or as a market driven commodity could have an impact on the way teachers see their purpose and this in turn could impact on their professional identity.

Much of the research carried out by authors cited within this chapter has explored the views, perceptions and experiences of teachers through a qualitative, and often a narrative, approach. Listening to what teachers say they feel in response to what they experience in their professional roles provides an insight into what it is like for them to be a teacher in mainstream schools. In the following chapters I describe the methodology and methods used to investigate the experiences of teachers supporting children identified as having SEBD. I explain how I began to develop an understanding of their perspectives about their practice and how they felt about their roles. Specifically, I also demonstrate how a narrative approach enabled me to begin to identify how these teachers positioned themselves, and the children they taught, and how this could provide an insight into the dilemmas they face in teaching children identified with social and emotional difficulties.

The identification of the key themes explored above informed the formation of the aim and sub questions for the study. To recap, these are as follows:

1. How do expectations in relation to policy and curriculum impact on teachers' feelings about what they do?
2. What is it like to support learners who are identified as having SEBD?
3. How do the additional needs of children identified as having SEBD impact on the teachers' feelings and experiences?
4. How do the experiences of supporting children identified as having SEBD in mainstream classrooms influence how teachers feel about the expectations placed upon them?
5. How do these experiences influence how teachers feel about what they do, professionally and/or personally?

These questions provided specific focus areas that could be considered when gathering and analysing the data. They gave structure to the process and design of methods. In the next chapter I explore how the research design was developed to enable me to begin to collect and interpret the data from the teachers who participated in the study. I describe how the research approaches developed by those including Connelly and Clandinin (1990), Sikes (2006), Elbaz (1990) and Bolton (1994, 2004, 2008 and 2014) provided structure and understanding for my own research methods.

## **Chapter 4: Developing a methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The reviews of policy and research literature in the previous two chapters highlight concerns teachers have expressed in relation to education policy directives, curriculum guidance and expectations, and the impact a performance-led and measurable-outcomes based ideology may have on practice. In this study, I wanted to find out what teachers felt about these challenges and to learn more about what it is like to teach in a mainstream primary classroom in response to these directives. I felt that this would provide an insight into the participating teachers' views of these challenges. The literature review also identified links between the teachers' professional identity and indications of how they saw their role. I therefore set out to design a study which would explore how teachers *feel* about what they do.

This chapter describes the initial stages of the journey I took to prepare for collecting data from teachers which was originally shaped by a phenomenological approach. I explain how I came to decide on the research design I intended to use and how this developed and became more focused following my first visit to a school. I describe how the data I collected there developed my appreciation of how relevant *stories* were to teachers in their conversations with me. This prompted a review of the methodological literature about narrative. I therefore conclude with my reflections on how this methodological knowledge and understanding was used to re-shape my methods so that I could use narratives in the refined study. Chapter 5 focuses on the methods and analysis which were developed.

### **4.2 Beginning with a phenomenological approach**

The process for deciding on the most appropriate research design involved extensive reading of the different approaches available. The merits and disadvantages discussed in Creswell (2007), Clough and Nutbrown (2007),

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) were considered. I reflected on how each approach could help me to answer the sub questions effectively. I also acknowledged that it was important to have a rigorous approach to interpreting the conversations I was going to collect. The need to make sense of the words spoken and the behaviours observed immediately excluded any quantitative approaches.

Creswell's description (2007) of phenomenological research states that,

*a phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon. Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon. (p58).*

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) identified that phenomenology has different variants that focus on participants' experiences of practice, culture or environment. I recognised that phenomenology was pertinent to my focus in this study because it would enable me to use approaches that I felt were appropriate for finding out what teachers felt about their experiences. The important point for me was that I wanted to find out what *it was like* to teach children identified as having SEBD in mainstream classrooms whilst working within an education system which had performativity as the driving factor. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) described phenomenology as

*Seeing things as they really are and establishing the meanings of things through illumination and explanation rather than through taxonomic approaches or abstractions, and developing theories through the dialogic relationships of researcher to researched (p170).*

By acknowledging and using my prior experiences as a teacher in mainstream classrooms who had worked with children who sometimes exhibited challenging behaviours, I felt that I could develop an effective dialogue with the teachers due to having some shared knowledge. I felt that the act of teaching children identified as having SEBD in mainstream classrooms could be described as a phenomenon. Van Manen's (1990) work on phenomenology identified that the



purpose of such a research approach was to get “a grasp of the very nature of the thing” (p177) and this was what I wanted to achieve. The aim to find out how teachers felt about working with children identified as having SEBD was ‘the thing’. Dewey (1938) described how an individual’s experiences could influence how they behave and respond to the events within their environment. He had recognised that experiences that happened in life would influence and impact upon feelings and future actions and this seemed very relevant to what I was interested in. I knew that I wanted to know how policy directives and changing expectations of the teaching role impacted upon what teachers did and how they felt about it.

I felt that interviews and observations would provide an insight and depth into the lived experiences of the teachers in their classrooms. I hoped that analysis of these would provide a developing understanding of how teachers acted in, and felt about, their roles that played out within the mainstream primary classrooms by focusing on the narratives teachers shared with me. I discuss in Chapter 5 how I developed the design and approach for this study.

In the next section I describe how I began by identifying appropriate schools to visit and devised the interview questions and observation foci which are described in the next sections.

### **4.3 Identifying mainstream primary schools for this study**

As a university link tutor I was experienced in visiting schools responsible for supporting teacher trainees whilst on their school placements; I had met many teachers and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) with experience of working with children exhibiting challenging behaviours. This provided a useful network of professionals who could talk about what they had experienced and were aware of in relation to SEBD. A decision was made early in this study not to include any schools I was working with in a teacher training capacity; this was to avoid any conflict of interest or confusion as to the purpose of my visit and also because any teacher who may have wanted to talk about

any negative aspects of their setting may have felt this could have an impact on the future placement of trainee teachers. However, the teachers that I had prior contact with gave me suggestions for possible schools to visit. These suggestions were based on teachers' knowledge of schools that provided additional support for children identified as having SEBD, or upon knowledge of other teachers who were currently supporting learners identified as having SEBD. These suggestions together with other experiences and contacts that I already had generated a list of twenty-five schools for possible use in the study.

The second part of this process involved reducing the initial list of twenty-five schools which were geographically accessible in northern England to a more manageable list of ten schools. This was achieved by scrutiny of each school's most recent Ofsted report. This was necessary for two reasons: firstly, ten schools would be a manageable number for establishing contact and setting up initial visits; secondly, the Ofsted reports would provide some insight into the provision for SEBD in each school. The reports all refer to the specific support provided for "the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school" (Ofsted, 2013, p5) as this is an element of the inspection criteria and is as near to the focus of SEBD as it was possible to get. Considering these comments gave me insights into a range of approaches schools were using to support their SEBD focused provision and this enabled me to select schools. I looked for schools which were acknowledged by Ofsted as providers of education for children identified as having SEBD; those that were not were eliminated from the initial list of 25. Although successful Ofsted gradings for each school were not used to influence the selection process - whether a school was judged to be outstanding or good was not considered - any school that had been given 'notice to improve' were removed from the initial list of schools. My own prior experiences of working in schools judged by Ofsted to 'need improvement' were that this tended to trigger intense scrutiny by inspectors, rapidly changing practice and high levels of pressure on the staff. To ask such schools for participation would have been insensitive of me and any comments they may have made about the stresses and strains of teaching may have been attributable to the experiences associated of being placed in this Ofsted

category and not to the pressures of teaching children identified as having SEBD, thereby making the data misleading.

The ten schools were identified and each head teacher was contacted by email. The aims of the study were explained and they were asked for an initial expression of interest for being involved. Nine head teachers responded; two did not want to be involved, one offered to take part in the following academic year (which did not fit within the timescale for the study), and six confirmed an interest and agreed to an initial meeting to discuss the study further.

Each initial meeting with either the head teacher or SENCo (decided by them) was different in structure and length, depending on their availability, but tended to include a tour of the school, discussion about the study, discussion about the pupils they had identified as having SEBD, and identification of the staff who would be happy to meet with me in subsequent visits. Dates were agreed and the focus for each visit discussed.

Two schools out of the six withdrew from the study in the early stages. The first asked to withdraw two days before the initial meeting was due to take place explaining that they did not feel their provision for SEBD was appropriate for inclusion in this research. I replied assuring them of anonymity and that no further contact would be made. The second school was visited once. This involved talking with the SENCo and Year 6 teacher. The conversations were recorded and further visits were arranged. In the days following the visit, the school was inspected by Ofsted and initial feedback to the school by the inspectors identified that a successful outcome was unlikely. The Year 6 teacher contacted me, explaining that the staff were very upset about the inspection and felt they could no longer be involved in the study. As this was the first of the five schools<sup>4</sup> to be visited by me, I asked if I could use the experiences learnt from the initial meetings and they agreed. Further details about the pilot study are now described.

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<sup>4</sup> Pen portraits of all five schools can be found in Appendix A

## **4.4 Pilot study**

### **4.4.1 Interviews**

Prior to the visit to the first school in July 2013, I prepared a list of questions to ask in advance which would be used in a structured interview. Guidance for designing interviews had been taken from Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) and Clough and Nutbrown (2007). I had used the Clough and Nutbrown's framework for interviewing to shape appropriate questions. Their lists of questions and suggestions about intentions, practicalities and critiquing my own practice enabled me to devise, edit and review a list of questions that I could use within the interview process with the teachers. For example, I considered how I could ensure my questions: ensured the participants could share their experiences as openly and comfortably as possible; that the questions were relevant and linked to what I wanted to find out about; that they provided opportunities for them to share their experiences; and that I remained aware of the impact I might have on their responses (encouraging, unresponsive, verbal and non-verbal interactions).

I conducted two interviews, one with the SENCo and one with the Year 6 class teacher in the school. These were recorded using a Dictaphone. The questions were organised into two sections: information about the school, and information about teaching. The questions asked are listed in Appendix B.

My reflections on the interviews were recorded immediately on the Dictaphone after leaving the school premises. This enabled me to review the interviews and my impressions of how the interviews had gone and reflect on what I had heard whilst the experience was still fresh in my memory. This recording also included suggestions for how I could develop and improve my interview technique on subsequent visits. Two examples of transcripts (one from the pilot study and one from later in the study) of recorded reflections can be found in Appendix C.

#### 4.4.2 Reflection on the first visit and interviews

An unexpected feature of these first two interviews was the amount of stories the teachers told. They told stories about experiences they had had whilst teaching, about what it was like to work with children exhibiting challenging behaviours and about their feelings relating to this. On one occasion, the teacher interrupted the question and answer structure I had developed. He moved away from the answer, described an event with a pupil and then brought the conversation back to my question to allow me to continue with my structure.

*Yeah, that's basically what we've said this morning ... 'if you don't behave in singing you're gonna get a laptop. He's actually brought himself round, he was testing at the beginning, he went to climb up the ropes but came back down again, brought himself back round. So yes, your role then, what did you say?*  
(Pilot, Y6 teacher).

It became clear that the list of questions I had devised were inappropriate for several reasons. I felt that asking the questions interrupted the flow of what the teachers were saying; some of the questions were already addressed through previous responses; and the stories and anecdotes shared were more easily and comfortably offered if participants were left to talk, rather than being interrupted with questions. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) describe how this type of structured or focused interview, can inhibit the responses by the interviewees. They may be appropriate when the interviewer needs to gather specific responses for particular aspects of the study, but are less likely to encourage deviation or modification by the respondent. Kerlinger's (1970) guidance for an unstructured interview approach in which the questions are more open-ended therefore seemed more appropriate. This would allow a more relaxed conversation to take place in which both interviewer and interviewee could share experiences, and elicit more detail, elaborations and personal comments.

This experience prompted further reading, and consideration of a less structured approach which seemed to have narrative at its heart. As the visit had taken place towards the end of the summer term, and visits to other

schools had been arranged for the autumn 2013 and spring 2014 terms, I had the time and opportunity to research a narrative approach and reflect upon the original design of the interview. This knowledge and understanding shaped the structure, preparation and expectations for all future visits to the other four schools. The methodological implications of these changes are explained below.

#### **4.5 Using narrative in the study**

Sikes (2006) described narrative as a feature of communication in which experiences are shared. By reflecting on events, people make sense of what happened and consider their responses to those events. In this section, I first consider the function of narrative and then go on to explore why narrative is valuable as a method of inquiry.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) considered narrative to be “a way of characterizing the phenomena of human experience and its study” (p2). In order to develop an understanding of what it is like for individuals in their lives, such as work, relationships and challenges, it is useful to listen to what they say about the events they experience. However, Goffman (1975) argued that narratives are more than just a retelling of events to another person. Narratives invite the narrator to look again at what happened during the retelling and to experience again what took place. This then enables them to consider their own place within the event. This means that “selves are made coherent and meaningful” through the process of telling stories (Bamberg, 2004, p42) and the narrator becomes reflective of their own practice. This connection between telling others about an event that has taken place and how the narrator responded and behaved as a result of what happened was discussed by Polkinghorne (1995).

Narrative descriptions exhibit human activity as purposeful engagement in the world. Narrative is the type of discourse that draws together diverse events, happenings and actions of human lives (1995, p5)

This is particularly likely when an event has brought to the fore feelings of disharmony or “a breach between ideal and real, self and society” (Reissman, 2002, p219), between what was said or done at the time and how the narrator felt about it. Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) description of the temporal nature of narratives demonstrated that this reflective, ‘making sense of what happened’ element of narrative is relevant to the present, past and future life of the narrator. Whilst the telling of a past event may be occurring in the narrator’s current life, the reflective experience may also have an impact on the life to come. It may be that the narrator develops clarity about the event during the telling (Sikes, 2006) or that the event that took place originally is affective and changes the way in which it had originally been viewed or interpreted. In either instance, it is possible that the telling of a story will influence future actions or responses. Examples of this are described by Kelchtermans (2009) who links teachers’ perceptions of experience to future actions or ways of thinking. She explains how a teacher’s identity is,

not a static, fixed identity, but rather the result of an ongoing interactive process of sense-making and construction. It thus also indicates how temporality pervades self-understanding: one’s actions in the present are influenced by meaningful experiences in the past and expectations about the future. The person of the teacher is always somebody at some particular moment in his/her life, with a particular past and future (2009, p263).

Therefore, narrative descriptions of experience for the researcher has several facets: it describes what happened; it indicates what the narrator thought about what happened through the way they describe it. It also gives the narrator the opportunity to make sense of what happened as they describe it; and, it situates the narrator in terms of time and future actions.

Bruner describes narrative from a constructivist perspective (1971). He recognised that the narrator’s reflections would influence their actions and therefore be part of a constructive process in terms of what they did and thought. He stated that narration will also affect their identity as a result of the process; the narrator creates an interpretation of who they are through their responses to what has happened. Benwell and Stokoe (2006) develop this

view, stating that the social interactions are an important part of living and therefore review, storytelling and reflections all support the building of identity (as discussed in Section 3.5.1). Narrating events will therefore enable the individuals involved to make sense of their actions, judge their place within the event and have greater knowledge of themselves and how they do, or should, behave from that point onward (Bruner, 1971; Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). For these reasons, it was decided that a narrative methodology would provide a useful way of investigating and interpreting teachers' perspectives. I wanted to find out what the teachers felt about their role and how the expectations upon them (for example, performativity or behaviours of children) influenced how they felt and what they did. It was hoped that narrative which involved aspects of reflection on the part of the teacher would give some insight into how they felt and why they did what they did. I consider this in greater depth in the next section.

#### **4.6 Why is narrative relevant for research with teachers?**

In this section I reflect on the reasons why narrative was particularly relevant for this study, by drawing on previous research which has utilised this approach.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990), researchers with a particular interest in researching teacher education, were influential in the development of narrative. They identified that teachers naturally tell stories to each other and that these stories enable teachers to make sense of what they do and how to develop their practice. Gough (1997) argued that emancipation was possible for those involved in narrative research. Although much of his research focused on fiction, and on detective novels in particular, his reflections on narrative have been developed by researchers in education such as Webster and Mertova (2007). Gough (1997) argued that telling stories enable the narrator to reflect on what happened, where they fit within the events and to appreciate how the event is related to broader aspects such as culture and relationships. He claimed that the stories would bring to light insights and understandings that the narrator may not have been hitherto aware of. As a result of these new



insights, the narrator may then change how they might act in the future and change the outcomes for themselves. This he argued, was emancipation through narrative.

Elbaz (1990) discussed why teachers, in particular, should be encouraged by researchers to share their experiences through narrative. She referred to the benefits researchers can gain by talking with teachers about events that take place in their classrooms. She acknowledged that a shared understanding of the context and what has happened through the story telling process is a good way of making sense of what has taken place. Therefore, to capture how teachers feel about an event, it is appropriate to encourage them to tell stories about their experiences. Elbaz (1990) claimed that teachers regularly play the role of the storyteller, either with children in the classroom or with colleagues in the staffroom. Cortazzi (1993) identified a very high number of stories describing classroom incidents and teachers' experiences when looking at his own research data and confirms that these "naturally occurring narratives" (p19) demonstrate how easily teachers revert to using story throughout interviews and discussions when in dialogue with researchers. He also agreed that, as discussed above, the telling of stories could be beneficial for the teachers as well. The story may be told in order to make sense of an event. By retelling the event to colleagues, perhaps in the classroom or staffroom at the end of the lesson or day, it is possible to try to find the answer to 'Did I deal with that in the right way?' or 'What happened there?' Teaching a class of primary children, where the lessons tend to be successive throughout the day with minimal breaks, means that teachers have limited time to reflect on what they are doing during lessons; reflection must happen later. Therefore, it is possible that being asked to take part in conversations about their experiences and practices with an interviewer would also provide reflective opportunities that may support their practice and understanding.

Kelchtermans (1997), Burnett (2006) and Webster and Mertova (2007) confirmed the research benefits of narrative for finding out the experiences and perceptions of teachers. For example, Webster and Mertova (2007) explained how they used narrative in their research to support the professional

development of teachers and teacher educators. Burnett (2006) described how narrative also enables the researcher to develop an understanding of what teachers feel is important in their experiences,

Using this kind of evidence [stories told by teachers] necessarily privileges a narrative orientation towards knowledge. It values individuals' perspectives on experience and the meaning they extract from it ... they do provide access to what teachers themselves see as significant (p322).

Hargreaves (1994) confirmed that the stories teachers tell will often provide a new or different view of the process of teaching and learning. He proposed that stories can provide insights into different aspects of their experience. These may range from the technical elements of implementation, focusing on skills and strategies (the how and what), to the perceptual aspects such as the emotional and judgemental (how they felt).

However, there is another benefit that can be gained through the use of narrative in professional practice and I now describe how the work of Bolton (2014) and the way in which she incorporates emotion and narrative in reflective professional development is relevant to my study. She argued that creative writing and storytelling could enable deeper levels of reflection and understanding of the events that take place in professional practice. In my study, I sought to explore professional dilemmas brought about by the pressures placed upon teachers and the way in which their emotions impacted on what they did and how they felt. In doing so, I was inspired by Bolton and her work using narrative to explore emotional experience.

#### **4.7 Bolton and storytelling in narrative**

Bolton's studies of health care professionals, conducted over the last two decades, identified that professionals can experience catharsis as a result of being given the opportunity to tell stories about their work. Her experiences as a researcher stemmed from her practice in healthcare and her work with medical professionals. She advocated that story telling could be a curative and

healing process, explaining that it was fundamental to the storyteller in terms of making sense of their own thoughts, feelings, beliefs and values (2014) and in enabling the narrator to get “as close as possible to what really happened” (2004, p92). Her view was that by reflecting upon, and talking through, or writing about, what has happened, the storyteller can position themselves in relation to what they did, why they did it, and what they felt about it (Bolton, 2009). They would then be able to evaluate the wider implications this experience has for their role and values.

Bolton’s work has focused on two key aspects: the nature and benefits of creative story writing for therapeutic and reflective purposes, and her experiences of using this approach in healthcare. An example can be found in her reflection on the stories told by doctors, nurses and patients. She described stories in which the storytellers were able to come to terms with their situation and referred to accounts in which they were able to write “themselves out of their bad psychological situations” (1994, p161). Bolton suggested that these accounts provided comfort and resolution. Bolton’s most recent text (2014, a fourth edition, originally published in 2000) explored how narrative approaches are valuable for reflexive practice. She argued that these have a beneficial impact on self-awareness, ethics, and values, and are supportive to those choosing to look again at, and develop, their actions.

It is appropriate to draw parallels between the reflective approaches recommended by Bolton for health practitioners and the stories told by teachers in education. Both health professionals and teachers develop relationships with the adults or children they care for (Bolton, 2004, 2008). A consultation with a patient when trying to help them is similar to the interactions with a pupil when helping them to learn. The duty of care held by teachers and health care professionals, despite having different outcomes, leads to a relationship where one person in authority, and with greater knowledge and skills in the relevant field, is providing support for another. Both practitioners are held accountable by their professions’ regulators and have the responsibility put upon them to make a difference. As a result of this, there may be a dichotomy between what they must do and what they can do within the confines of their interactions and

environment within which they work. They both work in stressful situations that draw upon their knowledge, prior learning and experiences. They also find that both their roles have some element of emotional input (Bolton, 2009). Teachers who are working with children identified as having SEBD may experience increased stress levels due to the challenges they face (as discussed in Chapter 3) and this places an extra strain upon them. Being given the opportunity to use Bolton's reflective and reflexive approaches (Bolton, 2014) could enable teachers to realise, appreciate and come to terms with their own personal, professional and emotional responses. However, Bolton's work placed emphasis on the therapeutic benefits of creative writing rather than on spoken narrative. I am also mindful of her critique of her own work when she acknowledged that the benefits of reflective writing for health care professionals may be a difficult and painful process (Bolton, 1999). Her reflections heightened my awareness that teachers may also find storytelling of their experiences difficult, or even painful, but I felt that this was relevant to understanding their emotional responses. This linked to the work by MacLure which is discussed in Section 5.5.3 and also to emotional labour in teaching which was discussed in Section 3.2.

Bolton's research, arguments and recommendations were helpful as I developed and refined the narrative approach for this study. I recognised that the storytelling process had been beneficial to me in my own professional experiences (as described in Chapter 1) and I hoped that other teachers would find the process of telling stories about the events in the classroom beneficial for them too. The main aim of the study was to find out what teachers felt about their professional experiences and if, as Bolton asserted, greater levels of reflection and professional self-awareness could be achieved through telling narratives, then her guidance would be useful in developing the use of narrative within the phenomenological study.

#### **4.8 Refined methods used in the main research study**

The lessons learned in the pilot study and my study of narrative methodology led me to fine tune my approach to interviews. Meetings with the teachers from that point were regarded as conversations and the formal and structured question and answer style was no longer used.

#### **4.9 Summary**

In this chapter I have described the early stages of developing the research design for this study. As indicated earlier in this chapter, I had identified a phenomenological approach which at first appeared to be appropriate but on reflection was too broad to be useful in the data collection and analysis. The phenomenon was relevant and with the inclusion of narrative, the process became more specific and appropriate for the teachers who participated in this study. I realised that the phenomenon of mainstream primary schools incorporating SEBD could be looked at through using a narrative approach. Providing opportunities for the participants to talk freely and share their stories would I felt, generate data which was rich and deep and which would help me develop an understanding of how the teachers felt. The next chapter describes the second part of the process, which builds on the lessons learned from the pilot study. I describe the methods used for gathering the data from the four schools, the analytical process and the ethical considerations made.

## **Chapter 5: Methods, analytical approaches and ethics**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methods used in the data collection for this study and the approach to analysis. I describe the participants who took part in the study and the methods used to encourage them to share their views. I explain how a combination of conversations, observations and discussions of photographs, taken by the teacher participants. These methods were used to prompt stories which generated wide ranging insights into their views about their roles and their feelings about the children they worked with.

An overview of the analytical approaches used to make sense of the data is provided together with a discussion about the challenges and limitations faced during this process. I describe how a range of analytical processes, both deductive and inductive, enabled me to arrive at a series of themes. I also describe challenges faced in terms of how I positioned myself within the process and how it was important to acknowledge my own influences on the analysis and interpretative processes.

This chapter concludes with the ethical considerations taken into account during the process, including consent, withdrawal and the way in which the voices of the participants are presented.

### **5.2 Participants involved in the study**

A total of nine teachers took part in this study. An overview of their roles, as described by them is provided in the table below (pseudonyms are used for each participant).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A list of all participants together with their interviewing 'identifier' used to tag each of their quotes used can be found in Appendix D.

<b>School</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
A	Val	Year 6 class teacher
A	Amy	Year 4 class teacher
A	Claire	Year 5 class teacher
B	Izzy	Head of Inclusion support and teacher
B	Nicole	Year 1 class teacher
B	Bea	Year 5 class teacher
C	Rose	Inclusion support manager and SENCo and part time Year 2 teacher
D	Yasmin	Inclusion support manager and SENCo and part time teacher
D	Tom	Head teacher <sup>6</sup>

Table 5.1: Participants' roles.

Throughout this thesis, I refer to the interactions that took place between the participants and myself. In light of my developing understanding about how the interactions needed to include open-ended questions so that the teachers felt able to elaborate through storytelling, I am reluctant to refer to them as interviews. While it is recognised that research interviews are conducted in diverse ways, ranging from the structured to the very open-ended (Gubrium, 2012), the term 'interview' may give the impression that our meetings tended towards a question and answer format, but this was not the case. Therefore, in what follows I have chosen to use the term 'conversations'; by doing so, I am indicating my awareness that the interactions were informal and responsive to what the teachers were saying. Further discussion and consideration of the principles and practices of co-constructing conversations are provided later in this chapter.

The participants in the table above all took part in conversations with me. Twenty-six conversations were conducted, each varying in length, ranging from two minutes to over one and a half hours. The conversations in total lasted eight hours and twenty-eight minutes. Further details about the quantity of conversations with each participant and the length of each can be found in Appendix D.

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<sup>6</sup> Tom was not invited to participate as a teacher during the initial meeting with Yasmin, but he did join the end of our conversation (D:Y:1) and his comments regarding capacity to provide additional support for one particular child seemed relevant to the focus of the study. Therefore, his brief input has been included in the analysis.

In the next section, I provide a pen portrait of each of the participant teachers who took part in this study.

### **5.2.1 Framing the teachers within their working contexts**

This section focuses on my perceptions and descriptions of the teachers. I acknowledge that these are the teachers as defined by me based on what they told me and our interactions.

I present a summary of what I learned about the teachers in each school, based on the conversations I had with them, the observations of them teaching and my reflections on our meetings. These summaries include my reflections on the way their views appeared to correlate with the ethos of the schools they worked in. It synthesises their perspectives with my own interpretations of what they did and the way they described themselves. It also builds on the thematic interpretations arrived at through analysis and enables me to begin to make links between how I have perceived what the teachers told me and how this links to the way they perceive the behaviours of the children (see Section 2.4). It is helpful to present these summaries at the outset of the analysis so that the reader can then create their own images of participants. This provides a 'personalised hook' with which the reader can hang their own interpretations and imaginings as they read the excerpts from the stories told. Clough (1996) argued that this was an essential part of presenting narrative. He argued that by creating individualised images of the participants, the reader could then make greater sense of the stories told. This, he felt, increased the authenticity of the data presented and analysed because the reader was able to relate to or recognise the people within the research. The overview below, therefore, provides some background knowledge and the opportunity to get a feel for each of the teachers who took part in this study.

Val, Amy and Claire in School A expressed similar feelings about their roles. All three were employed as full time class teachers in years six, three and five



respectively and did not have additional responsibilities for SEND or SEBD in the school. These teachers talked about how stressful they found the job. They each had over ten years teaching experience and could reflect on how their roles had changed since they entered the profession. They all described the frustration of what it was like to control the behaviours of specific children and they attributed this to why the work they did was so difficult. The school management expected them to structure their teaching so that the children could demonstrate progress every twenty minutes. The constant pressure to do this made them feel tired, stressed and worried about how the behaviours of some children affected learning and prevented them from teaching that would ensure consistent progress.

Claire explained that she had been ill which she said had been brought on by the stresses of her work. She seemed fraught and on edge whilst we talked. The time I spent with her in her classroom involved her constantly moving around the room; either tidying up from the previous session or preparing for the next. She did not seem very calm or content during our conversation. Although she described how she liked the children, her examples of their behaviours were expressed as if she blamed the children for making her role so difficult. Claire taught in Year 5. She had agreed to take part in the research following a conversation about my study that she had had with Val, her colleague. Claire did not give me any information about her career history. I estimate that she was in her forties.

Amy taught in Year 4. She described how the school year had started with worry and doubts as to whether she could cope, but said that things had improved as the year had gone on. She talked with humour and made connections between her emotions and her teaching. Amy had also agreed to take part in the study following a conversation with Val. She seemed happy to welcome me into her classroom and had invited me to observe an English lesson prior to taking me into the staffroom so that we could talk about the lesson without disruption; this time was set aside for her to do her planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) for the next week's lessons. Amy said that she was happy to talk to me during this time and that she did not mind losing some of her PPA time. Amy was the youngest out of the three at School A.

She had been teaching for about ten years and I estimate that she was in her late twenties.

Val, the oldest teacher in the study, reflected the most on how her role had changed. She cried, shouted and voiced her despair when she talked about herself and the children. She acknowledged that even though retirement was not imminent, she doubted whether she could continue teaching in the long term. She said that she was pleased that I was doing this research because she felt it was important that the issues of teaching in general, and teaching SEBD in particular, in the current system should be shared. She was unhappy about the pressures placed on teachers and children and felt that academic and workload expectations were unrealistic and inappropriate. She was passionate about using Philosophy for Children (P4C) in her teaching and felt that it supported personal and moral development for the children. She felt that delivering the current curriculum placed pressure on time and that this prevented her from teaching P4C regularly. She had to try and squeeze the P4C sessions into the timetable whenever she could but said that this was not enough. It was no surprise when I received an email from Val four months after we met saying that she had handed in her notice and was considering doing something different from full time class teaching. I estimate that she was in her fifties.

Izzy, Nicole and Bea, who taught in a primary school (B) in an area of the city recognised for high levels of social deprivation, unemployment and crime, were very different in their outlook on teaching. Their school provided many different support groups, interventions and the staff seemed to be proud of the positive relationships they felt they had built with families within the community. Izzy and Nicole described the supportive school ethos and the nurturing basis to what they did as teachers, in and out of the classroom. They spoke positively about the children and identified the many strategies available to them for supporting the children. They explained the benefits of using additional interventions such as nurture groups, Theraplay, and intensive social and emotional support sessions.<sup>7</sup> They recognised the challenges of teaching children with additional needs but never attributed blame to them or suggested

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<sup>7</sup> Definitions of terminology can be found in the Glossary

that progress in attainment was not possible. Nicole and Izzy, the youngest participants in the study, described the opportunities they were able to implement in order to make a difference for the children and their families. They felt that academic and social aspirations were realistic and achievable.

Izzy, a member of the school's senior leadership team was responsible for behaviour management, attendance and nurture. Izzy was my main point of contact at the school and it was she who suggested Nicole and Bea would be possible participants in my study. She worked closely with class teachers and children with a focus on social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. She provided guidance and support for teachers who were working with children who demonstrated challenging behaviours. She ran the nurture groups and worked closely with parents, carers and families that included children who were considered to be vulnerable, at risk or who were regarded as having SEBD. She had worked in School B for ten years. I estimate that she was in her thirties.

Nicole, a newly qualified teacher, taught in Foundation 2 (formerly known as the Reception class). I had previously taught Nicole as a teacher trainee but had no idea that she was working at School B until I arrived there and was introduced to her by Izzy. We did not know each other well, other than as tutor/trainee in lectures and seminars. Nicole demonstrated her enthusiasm for her role and talked about her aspirations for the children. She said that she felt happy at the school and talked with affection about the children in her class. She was involved in developing a reading project with a small number of parents regarded as being disengaged with the school at the time of our meeting. Nicole was in her early twenties.

Bea, a year 5 class teacher, had volunteered to talk to me when Izzy explained my study prior to my visit to the school. She seemed to be open and talked willingly about the challenges she felt she faced as a teacher in the school. She

had been teaching for about five years. We met after I had observed her teach an afternoon session in her class. Her comments indicated that she reflected on her practice and she explained how she would think about the interactions she had with the children and how she could improve upon them. She also said that even though the job was sometimes difficult, she was happy teaching in School B. Bea was in her late twenties.

Rose, a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) and part time classroom teacher in School C, worked in a school which seemed to focus on how both child-centred and subject specific approaches to teaching could be integrated in the classrooms. She talked about her role as a member of the senior leadership team and her responsibilities for pastoral teaching and learning in the school. She described the school's current ethos and provision and compared this with how she felt the school had been five years before that. She had worked in the school for approximately ten years. Rose did not talk about her personal feelings explicitly like the other eight female teachers who took part in the study. She did however, indicate her feelings about the provision for children who had been identified as having additional needs and she described the challenges she said she faced as a teacher. I estimate Rose was in her forties.

Yasmin, in School D, was passionate about developing a range of strategies to support the children in her school. As the school's SENCo with a part time teaching commitment, she was able to provide insights into the needs of the children as learners in the classroom and as individuals within the broader school environment. She expressed her concerns for the children who found it difficult to cope in the classroom and talked about a range of reasons for why she felt this was. Her reasons included medical diagnoses, inadequate parenting experiences and social deprivation. She identified a range of interventions similar to those listed by Izzy, Nicole and Bea, and like them, she also talked about the importance of supporting the whole family. This, she said, was her favourite part of the job and she was proud that she could provide parenting support groups. I listened to her and Tom (the head teacher) talking

together during one of my visits and they showed that they shared the belief that the children needed to be taught a combination of academic and pastoral skills. They talked about broadening the capacity in school to provide specific support for particular children and demonstrated a strong preference for child-centred teaching. They felt that the needs of the children provided the starting point for their teaching and planning rather than one which was shaped by the subject-specific curriculum guidance. Yasmin was in her forties.

These pen portraits, provide some insight into my perceptions of the teachers. Each of them presented themselves as keen to take part in the study. Their welcomes each time I visited their schools were warm and they seemed to be happy to share their stories.

In the next section I describe the organisation and process regarding the observations used within the study.

### **5.3 Observations**

These observations provided me with an understanding of the types of sessions that took place. They gave me an insight into the different ways that teachers worked with children who had been identified as having SEBD. In line with Scott and Usher (1999), I recognised that my interpretations and understanding of what had taken place needed to be contextualised. The observations also gave me an opportunity to understand what was happening in classrooms and provided a shared reference point. As discussed in Chapter 4, teachers were encouraged to share narratives about their events and their experiences of them. Observations helped to create some shared understanding of the types of events that took place (Elbaz, 1990).

In this study, observations took place in each school. I observed in mainstream classrooms where whole class teaching took place; in specific rooms identified for nurture groups and behaviour support sessions; in playgrounds; and in one

whole school assembly. I observed whole class lessons, small or large group activities and a one to one support session.<sup>8</sup>

Each observation was recorded using a Dictaphone and ethnographic style field notes (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995) were made. An overview of the observations completed, including which class, year group or intervention group, and the length of each observation is provided in Appendix E. The observation notes included information about who was there, where and when the observations took place and what happened (examples of observation notes can be found in Appendix F). When observing a class teacher who was participating in conversations with me, I ensured that the observations took place before the conversation with them. This meant that I could encourage reflections, explanations and elaborations on what had taken place. This was particularly useful as it provided a shared knowledge of the situation and was a good starting point for many of the conversations. The observations also encouraged the teachers to share stories. They used narratives to tell me more about what I had observed and to give me examples of events that provided more detailed descriptions, or background information, about what I had seen. The narratives also gave the teachers opportunities to reflect on how they felt about what had happened (Elbaz, 1990).

## **5.4 Photographs**

One member of staff from each school was given a digital camera and encouraged to take photographs of their setting and of aspects of the school environment which they felt demonstrated what it was like to be a mainstream primary school teacher who worked with children identified as having SEBD. By asking the participants to take photographs of where they supported the learners, I was able to see where teaching was happening (e.g. classrooms, nurture group rooms, side rooms). I felt that photographs would be a useful stimulus for our conversations and that they would be an effective way to

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix E for a full list of observations including context and length.

encourage teachers to use narratives to explain what was happening when the photographs were taken. I adopted approaches developed by Clark and Moss (2011) from their work with children in early years education. Their 'Mosaic Approach' promotes the use of photographs, taken by children, to help them demonstrate their perceptions of their environment. By combining interviews, photographs and a tour of the setting, Clark and Moss claimed that the approach is "participatory ... reflexive ... adaptable ... [and] focused on children's lived experiences" (p7). I felt that this made their 'Mosaic Approach' also appropriate as a method to use with teachers. Clark and Moss argued that the approach supports researchers who are searching for "agency, accessibility and authenticity" (2011, p7) and this was something that I was attempting to do. It seemed that the approach would be as valuable for adults taking part in my research as it was for the children who had taken part in Clark and Moss' studies. I wanted the teachers to share images of what they felt teaching SEBD in their school was like, but also wanted to avoid leading them or being too prescriptive. An excerpt from a transcript of a conversation with a teacher in which I asked her to take photographs can be found in Appendix G; this gives an indication of the brief that I shared with each teacher.

Not all teachers took photographs of the schools or classrooms. One teacher gave her apologies and admitted that she had forgotten and one explained that she did not have time to take more than three photographs. However, I still received a range of photographs. Some showed posters that were used to instil or remind children of the expected behaviours to be used in the school and some were of children or staff working together.

The photographs were printed out and taken into the relevant schools on subsequent visits or we looked at them on the camera screen. The photographs sometimes formed the basis of further conversations. The teachers were able to explain why they had taken the photographs and what they meant to them, and this process often stimulated stories about what was happening when they were taken. Two specific examples of conversations that emanated from photographs can be found in Section 6.2. Photographs from children's assessment booklets used by Izzy were also used to help her

describe the children who were involved in the Theraplay session I observed. Her photographs stimulated Izzy to tell stories about individual children and these prompted her to reflect on her role (see Section 6.2).

For ethical purposes, all photographs used in the conversations with the teachers have not been included in this thesis as they include photographs of children and settings which may enable them to be identified. I discuss the ethical considerations of this in greater detail in Section 5.9 later in this Chapter.

Parallel to the data collection process and whilst the conversations and observations were being transcribed, I made notes which were recorded in two forms – either through spoken reflections on the Dictaphone or in written form in either my journal or on the transcription sheets. These notes provided brief comments on salient points or aspects that I felt were relevant, and that I felt were important to remember as I carried out the more formal analysis process.

## **5.5 Analysis of the data**

In this section I describe how I used a range of diverse ways in which I engaged with the data. These approaches were:

- identification of examples of narrative within the transcripts
- deductive and inductive thematic analysis, and
- identification of unspoken responses in narratives.

In the following sections I explain and describe how these approaches supported the analytical process.

### **5.5.1 Identifying narrative elements within the data**

During the early stages of the analysis, I found it helpful to look at each transcript and extrapolate examples of narrative. This provided greater insight into how and when the teachers were using the stories to explain their experiences. Reissman (2002) urged caution when defining narrative and



stated that it could be too broad a concept and that “systematic methods of analysis and detailed transcription are often lacking” (p230). She recognised that it could be a difficult process to identify stories within the data collected. To address this, I used guidance by Connelly and Clandinin (2006).

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) identified “three commonplaces of narrative inquiry – temporality, sociality and place” (p479) that can be found within stories shared. They described how references to time, such as past, present and future, the social conditions that the story was set in, and the identification of place, can be found within each narrative. It is these that set the narrative element in data apart from other comments that the speaker may make.

By categorising the aspects of narrative on several transcripts, I became more confident in recognising examples of narratives and was able to confirm that many of the interviews showed that the teachers did shape their comments in a chronological way and did use temporal, social and contextual examples in their stories. However, there were also examples where some of the aspects were there, but not all. Cortazzi’s reflection on narrative inquiry (1993) recognised this. He referred to the value of anecdotes and partially told stories which he believed still provided an insight into the experience of the teacher.

This analytical process was not carried out on all the transcripts as I became increasingly confident in recognising what narratives looked like. It was appropriate for me to ‘try out’ the narrative approach at first to clarify my own understanding of narrative ‘form’ but once this had developed, I moved on to the thematic analysis.

### **5.5.2 Identifying themes**

Thematic analysis was conducted in addition to the identification of elements of narrative. This approach, I felt was useful to identify if and how the teachers referred to the areas I had described in the literature review and research sub questions. Policy, curriculum, professional identity and perspectives of SEBD

were used as pre-determined themes. This method of deductive analysis (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007) provided a structure to interpretation of the transcripts. For example, I used the research experiences described by Ball (2013) to support the analysis of transcripts about a 'performativity' theme. As explored in Section 2.7, Ball recognised that it is valuable for an education researcher to contextualise the behaviours and responses of teachers within the market driven and performance related education system in which they work. These responses, he argued, were developed at the same time as educational policy and were placing new and transformational demands on teachers' practice. By using the research and experiences of Ball as a 'lens' or way of looking at the transcripts, I could develop new interpretations of what the teachers had told me.

However, other themes developed and became apparent as the process continued. This inductive thematic analysis is typical in narrative methodology. Bold (2012) states that "narrative ... begins from the point of view of the storytellers, the people involved as participants in the research, not the researcher" (p132). As a result, the themes that arise from the stories they tell are specific to those participants and not the researcher. Therefore, I had to be open-minded and identify themes which I had not previously anticipated. These included aspects such as parents, other support agencies, assessments of children with additional needs, and resources. An example of how I began to identify categories from part of a transcript from a conversation with Yasmin in school D is shown in Appendix H.

I also considered how themes that I identified in the narratives shared by one teacher compared with comments made by other teachers who worked in the same school. This enabled me to see if there were similarities in what each of them felt was relevant and important. By taking into account how the teachers seemed to share views or priorities, it was possible to question if certain responses could be linked to particular types of teaching contexts. In School B, for example, the support the teachers said they gave to parents, and how important they considered this to be, was reflected in all of the transcripts and suggested that this was part of the school ethos and provision. I then

completed the same process on transcripts from teachers in other schools to see if and how they compared with each other.

By using a combination of deductive and inductive thematic analysis (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007), I could focus on areas which I suspected to be important, whilst remaining open to new and unanticipated ideas.

### **5.5.3 Identifying the unspoken responses**

MacLure's work provided a way of approaching the conversations in terms of their emotional and non-verbal responses (MacLure, 2003). MacLure described how she invited stories from teachers (and pupils and parents) in her research. She argued that the way in which such stories are read, heard and analysed must take into account more than just the words used. Her reflections on Deleuze's description of the "Logic of Sense" (2013, p660) recognised that understanding data is more than just interpreting words. There is the need to develop an understanding of the *feel* of what was said and to build a sense of 'how it was' for the person talking. She argued that this 'feel' is difficult to demonstrate in typical science based approaches such as grounded theory (see Strauss and Corbin, 1998) because it is abstract and difficult to grasp. MacLure argued that, in order to get an in depth understanding of what the participants are saying, the researcher needs to consider the information that can be gained "when the body surfaces in language" (MacLure, 2011, p999). The words presented in transcripts can only provide one particular set of information - what the participants actually said - but this can be enhanced and a greater depth in understanding can be gained by considering the noises that the storyteller also uses when sharing their experiences. By this, she is referring to "laughter, gasps, tears, sneers, snorts and silences and to those speech acts that obstruct the work of analysis, making it hard to break things up into categories or boil them down into themes" (MacLure, 2011, p1003).

MacLure's argument suggests one reason why just using a thematic approach to analysis would be limiting. Her guidance provided another way of looking at

the narratives. I was able to combine the words spoken with my reflections on events, and the emotions and non-verbal behaviours. This led to a further stage within the analytical process in which I considered the entirety of each recording to get a 'feel' of what the teachers were telling me. I listened for the unspoken responses described by MacLure (2011) for laughter, groans, sighs, crying and any other indications of how the participant was feeling. I then added these to the transcripts in an additional column which was for my own comments. An example of this is,

*Talks a lot about how challenging [child] is and becomes more animated – voice rises in pitch and tone ... she puts her hands to her head as she says 'aaarghh!' loudly ... begins to cry when she talks about [child] ... sarcastic tone of voice when she refers to Michael Gove – laughs without humour (?) and says 'yeah, right' when I tentatively suggest that good behaviour management will address the needs of those with SEBD ... moves towards me and whispers when criticising the head teacher (conspiratorial?) (D:Y:1)*

However, MacLure's studies also focused on the way in which the researcher influences and shapes the data generated. She highlighted the need for the researcher to be mindful of their place during the entire research process (2013). This, she claimed, was as relevant during the data collection as it was during the analysis; the researcher influences the process and this is discussed in the next section.

## **5.6 Problematising the place of the researcher**

In this section, I reflect on two different definitions of place. I first consider place in terms of geographical positioning – that is, where the teachers and I met and talked. The second is my place in terms of my prior knowledge, experiences and how this impacted upon the conversations that the teachers and I had.

Each time I met with the teachers I made a note of where we were within the school. I understood that I needed to ensure the teachers were meeting in a place which they were familiar with and felt comfortable in (Cohen, Manion and

Morrison, 2007). Most of the meetings were held in the teachers' classrooms when the children were not there and this seemed to be appropriate because it was an environment familiar to the teachers. Val and Nicole referred to, or indicated, particular places or displays on the walls to help them explain what they were talking about. This supports Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) reference to place as an aspect of narrative. The place in which the teachers and I talked provided both stimulus and context for some of the stories told. It was also possible for me to develop an understanding of the events that were being described because I was in the same environment in which they had occurred (Pink, 2012). References to the photographs and observations also helped to provide a context for the stories told by the teachers (Elbaz, 1990). It is also possible that the teachers' emotions were more readily shared because they were in an environment that provided familiarity and comfort. The place stimulated memories of events and the emotions the teachers experienced and this provided greater depth and understanding for how the teachers were feeling (MacLure, 2011). As I discuss the data collected from the teachers in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, I frequently refer to where the conversations took place to demonstrate the significance that place has for narrative and for understanding of 'what it is like' for teachers in their work.

Clough (1996) presents another view of the place of the researcher within the process. Whilst concurring with MacLure's view that the researcher's position is both affective and inevitable, he argued for a greater transparency in acknowledging their involvement. He recognised from his own experiences of gathering, analysing and presenting narratives, that it was important for the researcher to be explicit about their role in the process. Self-reflection, he stated, should be a part of the process for the researcher throughout the study. In this study, therefore, I attempted to be consistently clear about my role, prior experiences, intentions and place within the process; as Clough writes

we never come innocent to a research task, or a situation of events; rather we situate these events not merely in the institutional meanings which our professional provides, but also constitute them as expressions of ourselves (Clough, 1996, p74).

The other way of considering place focuses on my own prior knowledge, experiences and views of teaching. Having experienced teaching children identified as having SEBD in classrooms and nurture groups and through providing behavioural support strategies to teachers in various schools, I have my own stories, experiences, views and beliefs that cannot be ignored or extricated from the research. My prior knowledge could both be seen as influencing the data collection, analysis, and discussion, or as providing greater insight and understanding. Bruner (1971) argued that the practice of sharing stories in narrative should be seen as a shared experience. He argued that this supports the construction of understanding. Therefore, by explicitly participating in the conversations with teachers and by contributing my own experiences and stories, I was able to appreciate, or have experience of, the contexts the teachers referred to. This meant that I could respond to their comments in ways that arose from familiarity with the kinds of events they described. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) considered the benefits of research by researchers who are familiar with the context or content of what is being studied. I wanted to create a sense of equality through the social process of shared storytelling and benefit from the positive and encouraging impact this had on the quality of the discussions (Clandinin and Connelly, 1990). One example of this is found in the initial conversation I had with Izzy in school B. She talked about the emotional challenges of supporting children who are very distressed and the need to restrain them so that they do not hurt themselves, but that even at such a difficult time she felt very happy in her job.

*Izzy: "I love just love my job. I know it sounds sad but I do, I really enjoy it"*

*Helen: "Even at the most difficult times you know when you have somebody who is having this crisis? In my school, we would have three of us where we coped with some of the most dire crises and working with pupils who were having terrible times and one particular pupil who needed restraint because he was at risk of hurting himself, but even then, we still liked it, and that sounds awful ..."*

*Izzy: "Yes, but that calm conversation and that soothing, yeah, yeah, we are needed and I am with you on that, yeah, that being able to listen, to help and to have that and bring that child back down." (B:l:1).*

Izzy then goes on to talk about some very challenging encounters with children and her personal responses to them. It is possible that she would not have been so descriptive or open about her feelings if she had been talking to someone who could not empathise with what it is like to work in that situation.

Therefore, I regard my position as a former teacher who has experiences similar to the participating teachers as beneficial for the study. The data gathered provide emotional responses and shared understandings of what it is like to be a teacher of children who exhibit challenging behaviour and I feel my contributions to the conversations encouraged teachers to share such insights. Yet, it was still important to be aware of the way I could influence the conversations, transcriptions and interpretations throughout the process. I worked hard to ensure that throughout every interview and during the analysis phase in the study, I consistently reflected on my position as a PhD student so that I could be receptive to the participants' perspectives and limit my own. In the next section I explore some of the challenges and tensions in presenting the stories shared in conversations between participants and the researcher. I begin by exploring issues of power.

### **5.7 Problematising the presentation of stories told**

MacLure (2013) argued that it is not possible for the researcher to present the data as an exact portrayal of what the participant has said. She drew on the works of Kvale (1996) and Goodson and Sikes (2000) to support her argument. She said that talk often used in research is ultimately the product of the researcher who has retained control of the questions, shaped the participants' responses and then produced writing which is based on their own interpretation. She proposed that there was little evidence that the data represent the authentic voice of those interviewed but that a less formal approach can go some way to promoting authenticity in presenting what was said,

informal, colloquial speech is less troubled by power imbalances between interviewer and interviewee than interrogatory or formal

interview talk, and that conversational interviews can get much closer to the lifeworld of the subject (MacLure, 2003, p115).

The ultimate aim, she suggested, is that the researcher must aspire to produce clarity and purpose in what they say and that this will both engage the reader and demonstrate authenticity in clarifying that data are co-produced. An excerpt from the transcripts which demonstrates this comes from a conversation I had with Yasmin, a teacher in school D. The conversation felt relaxed and open to me and it felt as if Yasmin was being honest in her feelings with me. Yasmin's responses seemed to be equally relaxed and we had come to know each other, professionally, fairly well by this point. It felt as if we were developing the conversation together and that the feel of an interview that had been apparent at the start (however relaxed) was no longer evident.

Yasmin: *"It's the best job in the world"*

Helen: *"Is it?"*

Yasmin: *"Yeah, if I won the lottery, I'd still do this job, part time perhaps but I would, yeah, I can't bear not being with the kids, its ... it's just lovely"*

Helen: *"I used to worry that I liked it because it made me feel needed, and I started looking at myself and thinking is that me, I've got these need problems never mind about them"*

Yasmin: *"Oh I don't mind that, do you, I like it, I do, I like it" [laughs]*

Helen: *"It's when you've got someone who's having an absolute meltdown and things are horrendous and staff are walking past going 'woah!' and I'm thinking I love this job!"*

Yasmin: *"Yeah, yeah! [it fulfils me!] yes yes! but oh my god, and I know it's as much about yourself as it is about them, so yeah, it plugs a need for me and that's ... I like it". (D:Y:3).*

This is not a conclusive process though. Despite my efforts to be self-aware of my position and influence as the interviewer it is not possible to be sure that I have given an accurate portrayal of the events or of the teachers' feelings, values and emotions that were experienced at the time or during the telling. Self-awareness and reflection by the researcher does not ensure that the



transcripts and descriptions provided are a true representation of what the participants think they said and did. This is discussed in the next section.

### **5.8 Problematising validity in the portrayal of participants' stories in narrative**

MacLure referred to “the fallibility of memory ... [and] selective recall” (2003, p121) which leads to the stories told by participants being only half true or a partial portrayal of what actually took place. The storyteller will change the emphasis, details or shroud their innermost feelings so that the audience is presented with one particular interpretation of the event. By acknowledging and bearing this in mind the researcher can hope to get as close to the genuine life experiences as possible, but still needs to understand that the storyteller may be holding something back. MacLure (2003) suggested that the researcher must pay close attention to the way in which she influences the narratives shared – during the conversations and afterwards during the analysis. This will then increase the possibility of getting closer to the true voice of the participants who take part; though always recognising that the conversation is co-constructed (Bignold and Su, 2013).

Clough also explored how a traditional social sciences approach to analysis could lead to a reduced series of points which fit within codes and categories but lose their depth (Goodley, Lawthom, Clough and Moore, 2004). This point is reminiscent of the one made earlier in this chapter about the need for more than just a thematic approach. However, Clough's point also suggests that there is a risk of narrowing the portrayal of each participant if they are considered just through a series of themes. He acknowledged the possible flaws of such an approach whilst trying to portray the narrative of one particular subject, Nick (Clough, 1996). He felt that such an approach would result in a portrayal that lacked depth, emotion and the very essence of who he considered Nick to be. His critique of traditional social sciences research approaches to analysis claimed that the purpose of most research reports is to

present data that can be evaluated and checked by other researchers in order to prove validity and authenticity (Clough, 2004). He claimed that “it can hardly be surprising, then, that in the research report the communicative functions of language are elevated over its expressive qualities” (Clough, 2004, p373). Potts (1998) also warned against this approach in narrative inquiry just so that objectivity could be explicitly demonstrated. She stated that to do so would suggest that the subject of the study was a passive part of the process – one for whom the research is done to and not with. For Goodley et al. (2004) validity can be found in the responses of the audience. They argued that the stories shared must “demonstrate the actualities of life” (p184) and that if the audience can relate to what they read and consider them to be plausible then they can be recognised as valid portrayals. Therefore, the test of how valid the portrayals of participants are must rely on the authenticity and responses made by those reading about them. If the reader considers the portrayal to be one which ‘feels’ real and is one that they can relate to, then this is the best judge of validity. In light of this, I reflected carefully on how I would present the stories shared with me in this thesis. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 focus on my interpretations of the conversations I had with the teachers, and there are many examples of stories, some short, some longer. I do feel that they demonstrate what it is like to be a teacher, based on my own prior experiences, and by incorporating the stories told with observations and photographs, I hope that additional depth in the portrayals of the participants has been achieved.

Clough’s approach to using fictional narratives (1996) was briefly considered as a possible way to present the stories of the participants in this study. Clough (1996) presents fictional accounts of the participants within his research which are based on the many stories that have been shared with him. As a reader, I found them absorbing, aspects of them were true to my own experiences and they felt real. However, the presentation of stories, similar in style to those used by Clough, within this study may have involved deviating from the typical thesis structure; and this adventurous, but risky approach in presentation was not one I wanted to take. I did attempt three short fictions based on the conversations I had with three of the participants. I used their stories to help me build a picture of what it might be like for them as teachers and this fed into the analysis as

presented here. I needed to include my own interpretations and experiences to situate the fictions, and as a result, I began to develop an understanding of why Clough (1996) feels that fictions based on the stories told can lead to authentic portrayals of individuals. (See Appendix I for my attempts at fictional accounts based on teachers' narratives).

## **5.9 Ethical considerations**

In this section I consider the process of gaining ethical approval. I also reflect on the ethical considerations relating to narrative research and this is followed by a discussion about the ethics of researching teachers and children in educational settings.

### **5.9.1 Gaining ethical approval**

The Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2011) were read, understood and adhered to, throughout the research process. I acknowledged my responsibilities to the participants, the community of educational researchers and to educational professionals, policy makers and the public (BERA, 2011). As this study is not sponsored research, my responsibility to sponsors was not applicable; however, I was aware of my responsibility to the university and my supervisors who were supporting me throughout the process.

Applications for approval from Sheffield Hallam University Ethics Committee were sought and gained twice. The first time was at the beginning of the study and then, 18 months later when the focus of a narrative approach meant that fine-tuning and more specific explanations were needed (see Appendix J for the ethical approval form). This reflected how the narrative focused phenomenological study had changed and re-shaped the nature of the methods carried out in schools. Each application identified the ethical issues surrounding the sampling of schools and the teachers involved, consent by participants, confidentiality and anonymity, non-maleficence and the rights of withdrawal. In addition to this, due to this research taking place in a setting which is

populated by children, I ensured I fully understood and met the requirements for safeguarding in each setting as outlined in the DfE guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2014a).

Throughout the data collection process, the (non) involvement of children the study was considered. The purpose of the research was to gain an understanding of teachers' perspectives and so there was no intention to talk to any of the children in the schools. However, the presence of children and the ways in which their teachers interacted with them in observations were relevant. As discussed in Chapter 5.3, observations of the teachers working with children in their classrooms provided insight into their experiences and contexts. Using the observations as a basis for our conversations helped to generate a shared experience that sometimes provided depth in my understanding and our talk. In the same way, photographs taken by some of the teachers, as described in Chapter 5.4, also provided greater depth and understanding. However, this led to ethical implications for the study. Despite being asked to avoid taking photographs of children, Yasmin and Izzy shared over 20 photographs which showed children. I had stated that children's data would not be included in the study, but both teachers felt that the photographs were relevant to their reflections of what it was like to work with children identified with SEBD. The decision to omit photographs from the thesis and to anonymise and use pseudonyms ensured confidentiality. However, the conversations I had with Izzy and Yasmin were, in my opinion, richer and more enlightening in relation to their experiences, than some of the conversations with teachers who did not take and share photographs.

A further ethical consideration was my interaction with children in each of the schools. The only times I was with them was during observations. I did not talk to them other than to say hello, goodbye or to answer their questions, or when I took part in the Theraplay session in School B. I had anticipated that typical questions would include wanting to know who I was and why I was there. In light of this, I asked the teachers to introduce me and to explain that I was there to find out what they did at school. Most children seemed satisfied with this and any additional questions they asked tended to focus on asking for help or

feedback about the work they were doing. I tried to stay at the back of the classroom and out of sight as much as possible to limit distractions by my presence and I did not initiate any conversations. I had stipulated in the ethics approval form that I would not record any children. This did present a dilemma. Izzy's request that I take part in the Theraplay session and that I 'act' like any other member of staff meant that I could not make observation notes. Izzy and I agreed that my involvement in the session would provide valuable insight into her provision. Therefore, with Izzy's permission, I recorded the session on the Dictaphone but only transcribed her comments and disregarded any comments by the children. The recordings were deleted immediately after transcription. I consider this to have been an ethical and sensitive approach and solution to the dilemma of inadvertent recording of children in an education setting in which their presence was inevitable.

In the following sections I describe the processes and procedures relevant to the ethical considerations of consent, confidentiality and withdrawal.

### **5.9.2 Consent**

I met with each of the teachers individually during my initial visits to their schools and explained the details included in the 'Information to Participants' sheet (see Appendix K). I talked about my teaching background and briefly outlined the proposed research questions in order to ensure that every teacher understood the expectations, the extent to which I hoped they would be involved and to reassure them of ethical issues such as confidentiality and anonymity. I then gave each teacher a consent form (see Appendix L) and a copy of the Information to Participants sheet and asked them to consider whether they would like to be involved. I confirmed a date and time to return the form, but reassured that participation was voluntary and they could email me at any time to ask any further questions or to say that they did not want to be involved.

### **5.9.3 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Each teacher was given reassurance that their name and any identifying details, such as the name of the school in which they worked would be changed to ensure confidentiality. In addition to this, where teachers have referred to colleagues, children, or the children's parents or siblings during the conversations, these names have been changed to reduce any possibility of traceability.

#### **5.9.4 Right of withdrawal**

The option to withdraw from the study was explained and a clause included in the consent form reiterated this. The right to withdraw remained applicable until the analysis of the data took place. At this point every teacher was sent a copy of the transcriptions of each meeting and given the opportunity to reflect on what they and I said and it was explained that they could change, add or delete any of their comments as they felt appropriate. This was also the opportunity for them to make any further comments or share any additional information if they chose to.

#### **5.9.5 Ethics in narrative and education research**

I described above, the formal procedures for completing research in primary schools. Consent from head teachers for access and entry into their schools was given, and each teacher gave their consent for participation in the study. I ensured that I remained mindful of the safeguarding processes (DfE, 2014a) pertinent to working with children and ensured that I carried identification and a record of my Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check which showed that I was approved to go into schools. At no time during my visits to schools was I alone with children and I ensured that I, or members of staff, introduced me to the children and I asked each of them to confirm that they were happy for me to observe their sessions.

However, the ethics of working in schools and with teachers goes far beyond the formal procedures and checks identified in ethical guidance (BERA, 2011). In this section I consider relationships between participants and researcher, the challenges of gathering and presenting narrative data and the importance of ethical responsibility and care.

In Sections 5.7 and 5.8, I discussed some of the challenges experienced by researchers when involved in research involving narrative. I referred to MacLure (2003) and Clough's (1996, 2004) comments about their concerns about portraying the 'voice' of the narrator authentically. The interpretative role of the researcher inevitably leads to the possibilities of misunderstanding, misinterpretation and misrepresentation (MacLure, 2013). By acknowledging that the narratives were co-created (Bignold and Su, 2013) by the teachers and me during our conversations, I therefore understand that the content of what was said incorporates their experiences, but that I played a part in shaping their portrayal of those experiences. Yet, gathering the narratives told by the teachers, which results in the co-creation of data, can be an intrusive and fraught process (Josselson, 2007). An effective relationship between the researcher and participant which most effectively produces rich and revealing narratives involves the creation of an "intimate relationship" (Josselson, 2007, p539) and this requires trust,

Researchers try to build a research relationship in which personal memories and experiences may be recounted in full, rich, emotional detail and their significance elaborated. The greater the degree of rapport and trust, the greater the degree of self-revealing and, with this, the greater degree of trust that the researcher will treat the material thus obtained with respect and compassion (Josselson, 2007, p539).

The concern here, is that, even with informed consent, the participant cannot know how revealing or personal their comments are going to be until they make them, so they can only consent to taking part (Ely, 1991). Sikes (2010) described how participants may feel hurt or betrayed when reading what researchers have said of them. Researchers have a duty to interpret and share the stories that are told, and this may include unflattering portrayals, and whilst the promise of anonymity (BERA, 2011) goes some way to safeguard their

identities, the participants will recognise themselves in the text. Therefore, an ethics of care (of the participants and of the data) is necessary (Gilligan, 1982). One way of ensuring that the written transcript is recognisable to each participant is by sharing it with them. I emailed a copy of each transcript to each teacher and asked them to confirm that they were happy for me to use it in my research (they all did). Yet, this does not address the issue of how recognisable the data is to the participants once it has 'gone through' the analytical and write up process. Clough (2002) addressed this in *Narratives and Fictions* and re-presents the stories shared with him as his interpretations through fictional accounts (see Appendix I for my own attempts to do this). However, for me, ethical care and responsibility is achieved by careful application of Sikes (2010) advice,

My bottom-line, acid test for whether or not I consider my own or other people's research to be ethical is: how would I feel if I, members of my family or my friends were to be involved and treated and written about in the way the research in question involved or treats or depicts its participants? Any qualms raise alarms and questions for me (p14).

I have tried to present the stories in a way that I would be happy with if I had been the participant and I regard this to be indicative of ethical care and responsibility.

## **5.10 Summary**

The process for collecting the data from the teachers in this study took 6 months and the analysis was an iterative process. As a result of fine tuning the phenomenological approach to include narrative, I was able to focus on developing informal conversations between myself and the teachers so that they had more opportunities to share stories about their experiences. These narratives included more than just a recount of events that they had experienced. They often included reflections and feelings about how the teachers felt, either at the time, or whilst describing them to me. This, I feel, has led to a collection of conversations which are rich in detail, and which have given me opportunities to get a feel of what it



is like for them in their jobs. Some of the teachers also talked about the impact their roles and the expectations placed upon them by policy makers has had on their personal lives and views about the broader aspects of education.

The analyses of each transcript, observation, and my journal notes have identified three main themes. The first identifies the way in which teachers seem to frame their perspectives of the children they work with, and explores how these relate to perspectives associated with curriculum, SEN, SEBD and children with additional needs. The second theme identifies what teachers say about the pressures that they feel they are working under. It considers what it is like for the teachers and what they think it is like for the children when teaching and learning in an environment where progress and results are given such strong emphasis. The third theme identifies compliance as a major element of how teachers feel they are expected to respond to the requirements placed upon them. The next three chapters focus on each of these themes in turn and provide insights into the conversations I had with each of the teachers.

## **Chapter 6: Framing: “I am not going to teach her one to one or put her in a booster group because what she needs to do is sit there with her thumb in”**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the way in which the participating teachers seem to frame their perspectives of the children they work with, and this links to the discussion in Chapter 3 about perspectives associated with curriculum, SEN, SEBD and children with additional needs. I reflect on the way their views and actions appeared to be shaped by the schools within which they work. The remainder of the chapter focuses on how teachers appeared to categorise the children that they work with and their perspectives on curriculum provision for these children. Oliver’s (2012) description of the models of disability and Macleod’s (2006) account of perceptions associated with SEBD provide the frameworks for analysing how these teachers seemed to position children in relation to their (dis)abilities. The chapter concludes with teachers’ perspectives on the current primary national curriculum and how the perceived social, emotional and academic needs of children can lead to dilemmas as to what should or could be taught.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first considers how the teachers appeared to position the children they considered to have SEBD, and how far these positionings reflected the categories ‘sad’, ‘mad’ and ‘bad’ as defined by Macleod (2006). It also suggests another category identified in the data: ‘immature’. The second considers the teachers’ views on how they felt the current curriculum met the needs of the children, and the third and fourth identify ways in which the teachers had developed their teaching approaches in response to the social and emotional provision they felt was necessary.

The way in which some of the teachers appeared to be positioning the children they worked with who were regarded as having SEBD, is discussed in the next section.

## 6.2 Framing the child

As discussed in Chapter 2, Macleod's research (2006) identified that teachers are likely to categorise children who they consider to have behavioural difficulties in three ways. Macleod (2006) and Wright (2009) used the descriptor 'mad' to refer to the way in which some teachers attribute the atypical behaviours children exhibit as being due to medical diagnoses. The teachers' perspective of 'sad' recognised the links between children's behaviour and the inadequate social circumstances which results in them being classed as vulnerable. The third perspective – 'bad' – identified that teachers perceive behaviours as being deliverable and pre-conceived and children are sometimes referred to as naughty. Macleod (2006) argued that these different perspectives have an impact on the way teachers feel about the children, and may influence the way the teachers interact with, and teach them.

This section considers the three categories of perceptions defined by Macleod (2006) and how far these appeared to be demonstrated by teachers in this study. In exploring these different perspectives, I focus on three of the teachers in particular. I focus on these individuals in order to show how the relationships they had with a specific child in their school appeared to be linked to perceptions of 'mad', 'bad', or 'sad'. I felt that by describing Val and Simon, Yasmin and David, and Izzy and Katie, it would be possible to show how the teachers talked about these children and how they worked with them. I also felt that this incorporated the depth of detail that can be achieved through storytelling and narrative (Goodley et al, 2004; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). Focusing on a teacher and child's relationship, as described by the teacher, provided insight into the teacher's perception of that child. It was possible to see how the teacher's comments and feelings about the child related to their views about the teaching strategies most appropriate for that child. My intention in the next three subsections is to demonstrate how the nuances of the three perspectives identified by Macleod (2006) seem to play out in what the teachers said and how they regarded their relationships with the children. I then provide

one further section (6.2.5) which suggests that there is another way of perceiving children who demonstrate challenging behaviours which is not described by Macleod: 'immature'.

### **6.2.1 Val and Simon**

Val taught in a junior school on the outskirts of a city in Yorkshire. She had a year six class consisting of thirty-one ten and eleven year olds. When I first talked to her during a preliminary visit to the school about this study she was eager to take part and immediately identified one child who she wanted to talk about. I had explained that I wanted to focus on what it was like to teach children who are regarded as having social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Val looked at me, nodded, smiled and mentioned one child's name who I shall refer to as 'Simon'. I made three subsequent visits to the school and observed Val and Simon on two occasions and talked with Val during all three. Val explained during our first conversation that Simon had been listed on the school's SEN register under the EBD (emotional behavioural difficulties) category. As explored in Chapter 2, each school in England is required by the Department of Education to complete a census of information and the number of children classified as having SEN is one aspect of this.

Val told me that she liked Simon. He was a seemingly self-assured boy who responded to Val's comments in a way that suggested that he liked her too. I observed a lesson in which Simon demonstrated behaviour that distracted Val whilst she was teaching. His behaviour might be considered to be low level disruption (fidgeting, fiddling, sighing, tutting), the rest of the children in the class did not appear to be distracted. Val regularly looked at him but did not speak directly to him. During my observations, the children went to another room to join another class. This involved further close monitoring of Simon by Val whilst he lined up, walked to the other classroom and then sat down. I observed him trying to swap places with several children so that he could sit next to another boy. They seemed pleased that they were together but Simon

was soon moved by another member of staff and told to sit at the end of the line. Simon grimaced but did as he was asked.

Val and I talked about the events during the lunch break. She described how Simon's behaviour whilst I was observing him was "*really reasonable*" (A:V:1)<sup>9</sup> but that on another day he would have been "*kicking and screaming and shouting*" (A:V:1). We talked about how Simon had been playing with a ruler whilst she was explaining the instructions for the ICT lesson. Simon had been balancing the ruler on the edge of the table and flicking it so that it made reverberating noises. Whilst this may have been irritating for Val and the children, he did not touch anyone else with it. Val acknowledged that stopping him could "*detract from your flow, which there, probably didn't matter*" (A:V:1) but she explained that there was the possibility that he would start to disturb the other children. Therefore, she seemed to be anticipating the likelihood of worsening behaviour. This anticipation was demonstrated again when Simon changed his place in the line. She said that if she had been the one to move him rather than her colleague "*he would probably have given me a bit more grief*" (A:V:1).

I developed the impression, based on her descriptions of previous events involving Simon, that his behaviour had been considered challenging as he came through the year groups in school. So, by the time he reached Val in year six, she had come to expect problems. She referred to the first two weeks in her class as a "*honeymoon*" but that after that "*he really went for it*" (A:V:1) and the behaviour began to be more difficult for her to cope with. She referred to a poem to help her describe him to me,

*There was a little girl  
Who had a little curl  
Right in the middle of her forehead;  
And when she was good  
She was very good indeed,*

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix D for the interview codes

*But when she was bad she was horrid.*

(Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

Although Val used the word “*shocking*” (A:V:1) rather than horrid, she did seem to consider his behaviour to be ‘bad’. Unlike other teachers who have taken part in this study, Val did not look for reasons to explain why she thought he exhibited challenging behaviour. She said that “*his parents are very supportive*” and that she “*suspect[s] that he’s a very reasonable, measured, intelligent [child]*” (A:V:1). She said that he can do as he is asked sometimes and “*get a grip*” (A:V:2) but described that this was often done “*grudgingly*” (A:V:2). I reflected on her choice of words to describe Simon and began to question myself as to whether she too accepted him as a member of her class “*grudgingly*”. She considered Simon to be “*crafty*” (A:V:2) and “*a classroom nightmare*” (A:V:2) and explained that there were times “*when he’s being a little shit*” (A:V:2). None of Val’s descriptions or comments were said in a way that suggested she did not like him; her tone of voice tended to hint at weariness rather than anger. However, she was keen to demonstrate that he was capable of more disruptive and challenging behaviour than I saw whilst in the school. She emailed me within an hour of leaving after the ICT observation saying “*Simon in big out-of-control trouble over lunch time :( - just typical! Lovely to see you this morning*”. I think she said “*typical*” because she had hoped he would have been more disruptive while I observed him and the fact that he did after I had left was disappointing to her. Perhaps she felt that if I could see such behaviour then it would validate what she had told me. I felt that Val was describing Simon as a child who could choose between appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. She felt that the inappropriate behaviours made it difficult for her to teach and therefore placed the responsibility for this on Simon. For Val, Simon’s behaviour would probably be categorised as ‘bad’ (Macleod, 2006). She seemed to position Simon as being ‘bad’ because she talked about how he was difficult to teach and that she seemed to feel he was able to choose his behaviours. The perception that Simon had control over his behaviour and could act appropriately at times in the classroom seemed to indicate to Val that he was responsible for what he did. Val also described events in which Simon seemed to behave well with some teachers but not with her and this presents

Val with some contradictions. Simon can be held responsible for his behaviour because he can choose when and where to be 'naughty' so therefore Val is not responsible. However, Simon demonstrates most of 'his naughtiness' to Val but not to other teachers who Val thinks he likes, and she may be therefore responsible for his behaviour. Val's relationship with Simon is even more complex when she describes her affection for him. Even though she seems to describe him as being 'bad' she says that she still likes him and that it is her affection for him which seems to help her teach him.

*If the little person in your class who's behaving badly crosses the point where in actual fact you now dislike them then it all goes wrong and my advantage is that I love [Simon] to bits and some days I just touse his hair and we have a giggle and that's fine and that means that we get through the day when he's being a little shit (A:V:2).*

Val demonstrated to me that even though she might seem to perceive a child as being 'bad' that did not mean that she did not like him. She might blame him for his behaviours and her responses to those behaviours may involve discipline and control (Wright, 2009), but that does not mean that she does not feel she has a good relationship with him.

The relationship between Val and Simon was complex and this directly impacted upon her teaching. As I observed her teaching him and the rest of the class in an ICT lesson, she seemed to be constantly looking over at him, making sure that he was doing what he had been asked to do and giving him encouragement to keep working. She used humour to persuade him to work and he responded well to her, but there was the feeling that she was on edge and waiting for him to do something unacceptable. She confirmed this when she said, "*you never know what it is that triggers and half the time you never get to the bottom of what the trigger is, you just have to deal ... it's a reactionary thing*" (A:V:2).

It is this acknowledgement that the challenging behaviours tended to be inconsistent, and would result in her needing to be prepared to change her teaching approaches quickly in order to respond to the behaviours that seemed

to make the job more stressful for Val. It was interesting to observe Val and Simon during the ICT lesson because Val's interactions with Simon seemed to focus on how they related to each other. The pressures she seemed to feel were not emanating from lots of additional planning or the need to use different approaches or interventions. Instead, she was feeling the atmosphere in the room, testing Simon's emotional well-being to see if he was about to 'explode', checking to see that he was calm and content, and being prepared to intervene quickly if she felt that the atmosphere was changing.

### **6.2.2 Yasmin and David**

Yasmin was one of the teachers who had agreed to take photographs for this study. As explored in Chapter 5.4, I kept the brief broad, asking her to take photographs of things she felt were relevant to what it was like working with children identified as having SEBD. She took over twenty photographs and on my third and final visit to the school she explained each one. They were all photographs of groups of children taken at various times in the day: during lessons, at lunchtimes, in the playground during break time and during specific behaviour support sessions. She identified 'David' in two of the photographs and talked about him in all three of our conversations. She described the challenges she faced in terms of his social and emotional difficulties.

David was in year five and received additional support, individually and in groups, to help him access the learning in his mainstream class. Yasmin invited me to observe a 'Circle of Friends'<sup>10</sup> session that had been put in place for him. Circle of Friends consists of a series of sessions which involved a group of about ten of David's peers and David meeting up each week for about half a term, though the number of sessions could be flexible and dependant on how David felt they were going, he could ask for more, or ask for them to stop. The Circle of Friends sessions enabled David to talk to his peers about what he found difficult in school. His peers were also given opportunities to tell David

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<sup>10</sup> See glossary for definition



how they felt about his angry or disruptive behaviour. The intention was to raise awareness for all the children in the group so that they had a better understanding of the events that took place. The Circle of Friends then identified what they could do to help David. During my observation of one of these sessions I was aware of how David's peers had talked to him; they were able to articulate how his emotional outbursts made them feel. I was surprised by their desire to help him and Yasmin attributed this to the "*emotional literacy*" (D:Y:1) in school and she said that David was "*wrapped up in so much care*" (D:Y:1) as a result. When Yasmin reflected on one incident that occurred she described how the Circle of Friends had been instrumental in leading to a positive outcome for David.

*You know, I don't know if you remember David but he was like meltdowns, under the table, kicking the table and they were all frightened of him and not able to get on with his work, we're on the penultimate one now and last week he ... they said, look all we want you to do is to move out of the class when you're like that and go to a safe place. ... I caught him just sitting outside the classroom on the floor with his head down and I said 'are you alright' and he said 'I've moved out' and then LB one of the core girls here, she came outside and she just went 'David that ...' she didn't shout it ... she just went 'David that is brilliant', she said 'That's all we ever wanted isn't it?' and just walked off, and he went [smiles] and then we had his Circle of Friends after and they all came in beaming and said 'He's done it, he's left the class when cross' (D:Y:2).*

Yasmin's descriptions of David's behaviour seemed to suggest that this was due to deficits in his social and emotional skills. She talked about how "*he doesn't like bright lights*", experienced "*sensory overload*", "*gets angry*" and "*stressed*" (D:Y:1) and that this could be attributed to Asperger's Syndrome. Unlike Val, who presented Simon as a child who could be choosing to exhibit inappropriate behaviour, Yasmin saw David as someone who was unable to control his behaviour. She said "*he's not doing it to be awkward*" (D:Y:1) and that "*it's part of who he is*" (D:Y:2). She talked about how his anger and behaviour could frighten some of the other children but rather than regarding this as "*shocking*" (A:V:1) like Val, she identified his responses and put strategies in place to address them. As she looked at the photographs of David smiling at another child while they worked in the computer room she talked about how she was aware of the challenges he faced and how she felt that, at

the moment she took the photograph, he was showing successful interactions with his peers.

*OK. So, what was happening here was they'd gone into a lunchtime, er, finish off some writing, and er, his group are a group who go out for an intervention together so that's why they were all there and David had been invited down because he was having a bit of a wobbly time, but in the group he was talking to somebody opposite about helping him with his work and the kid was going to come over and help him. Now for David, that's good for him because in the class they kind of shy away from him and I just thought it was quite nice that they were all getting on, he was accepted when he came into the group and I think it was [child's name] who was saying, I'll come over and help you and he had just turned round to go oh thanks. (D:Y:2).*

Yasmin seems to see David's diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome as being an explanation for his behaviour. Her description here seems to exemplify what Macleod (2006) describes as the 'mad' perspective of SEBD: David is not choosing to behave in an angry, threatening or out of control way, he behaves like that because he has a medical condition. Yasmin talks about David with affection. She describes the challenges she feels he faces as a result of his diagnosis and how she and the other children in the school need to respond appropriately to help him. Yasmin's response to David encapsulates principles associated with the social model of disability. She acknowledges the difficulties that David seems to experience, and so puts a range of strategies and support processes in place to alleviate some of these difficulties. She also shares her views and perceptions with the other children in David's class. She 'trains' the children to support David and to try and understand that although his behaviour may be disrupting or disturbing, they can play a part in enabling him to cope, and fit, within the classroom. She selects a photograph of David standing on the edge of the playground, another pupil is stood about 1 metre away from him but looking in the same direction and says,

*Now they were just ... this is David, you know, the one who finds it difficult ... he often sits by himself at playtime and watches other children play and all the Y6s had gone out and were just running around, they were first ones out that day and [child] who's on school council - and she's just a poppet - and I just saw her walking down the steps and she did what a teacher would do, she didn't go right next to him, she just stood there looking at the playground with him and saying 'how are you'*

*and nobody made her do it, she did it completely off her own back, she's not even in his class, but she just stood there and was just looking out on the playground and just commenting on what she saw to get him engaged and it's something we'd do isn't it? You know, you'd go and stand next to him and go 'you alright then?' and she was doing it and I just thought that is brilliant, she's a gorgeous girl ... she's that kind of kid, she's from really sound family values anyway, she's a giver and she has been all the way through school, and she's volunteered for school council, peer mediation, 'ooh, I'll help them' you know and she's in there and she's a facilitator and the year group know David like they know [another child], they know what he's capable of and they know that he's got needs and we've done, we've done an assembly on Asperger's and we've done a classroom talk when they've been out with their parents and she understands (D:Y:3)*

It seems that an acknowledgement of a medical diagnosis (consistent with the 'mad' perspective and with the medical model of disability) provides Yasmin with the opportunities to provide support which encompass the principles of inclusion identified within the social model of disability. However, her perceptions and approaches are not limited to her own practice, she seems to have developed a whole school ethos which works towards enabling the children within it whether they have been identified with SEN or not.

### **6.2.3 Izzy and Katie**

During the second of two meetings with Izzy I took part in a nurture group/Theraplay session with a group of six children who were aged between five and seven years old. Izzy led the session and was supported by a teaching assistant who was part of the school's pastoral support team. The children were recommended by their class teachers for the group as they had been identified as having social and emotional difficulties. The session lasted just over thirty minutes and included songs and games which helped the children to talk about how they were feeling and to interact with each other (the observation notes for this session can be seen in Appendix F). They also took part in peer hand massage and shared any worries or experiences that they did not feel able to address in the classroom.

Before the children arrived for the session, Izzy took out a pile of folders and shared them with me. They were the individual progress files for each child. Izzy explained why the children were receiving nurture group support. She described the children as exhibiting atypical classroom behaviours, ranging from aggressive to withdrawn. She also mentioned some diagnoses that the children had been given, but on the whole, she focused on their home life experiences and how she felt that this was a cause of their behaviour. Izzy's many stories about the children focused on their vulnerability and the poor parenting that she said they experienced.

Izzy used phrases such as "*little boy*", "*little girl*", "*cheeky chap*" and "*lovely little bunch*" (B:I:1), "*bless him*" (B:I:3) and "*they're at the centre of our hearts*" (B:I:1). These descriptions suggested a sense of pity in the way she thought about them. She talked about how she had cried and been emotional when thinking about the "*very vulnerable*" (B:I:1). Her attitude towards them was very different to Val's or Yasmin's. She refuted the possibility that a child could be 'bad',

*This child is not choosing this behaviour, there is something underlying, there always is and I'm a strong believer that some people will say to us 'oh, they're just naughty', no they're not just naughty. Yes they may not have been parented the way that we may have done, but that's what's underlying* (B:I:2).

Many of her explanations for why she felt the children behaved the way they did were related to their parents. She identified parents who she felt were not able to support their children effectively and talked about how alcohol, drugs and their own health problems contributed to the children's vulnerability. Izzy's stories about the children were often long, detailed and told with a pitying tone to her voice. One example of this concerned Katie, a six-year-old, currently attending the nurture group,

*OK, Katie, girl in year 2 acts sometimes like she's 16. Has been involved in some sexualised behaviour whilst in school, likes to wear high heels, often brings lipstick in her pocket, mum and dad separate, dad fled, dad was involved in some kind of drug trafficking now back on the scene but very unstable and there has been some question around a history of substance misuse, her brother is exactly the same he's in year 4, quite*

*challenging behaviours at times, she's a little girl who has had to have some quite close monitoring for bullying, targets particular children, strangely, children of the same name, we've not quite fathomed out yet what that's about, two girls, exactly the same names and did exactly the same things to both, really interesting girl (B:1:3).*

Izzy's list of concerns about the family suggested the reasons why she felt Katie behaved the way she did. The correlation between vulnerability and SEBD suggested that Izzy thought about the children as 'sad' (Macleod, 2006). Izzy attributes Katie's behaviours in school to her experiences in the home and her upbringing. She does not explicitly blame the parents, but does talk of them in ways that are resonant of the 'bad' or 'mad' categories described above. It seems that parents who are drug addicts, like Katie's parents, are considered by Izzy to be bad parents and as a result Katie has become vulnerable. Izzy does not assign blame to Katie for her bullying behaviour; instead, she sees it as an understandable and 'sad' outcome as a result of her circumstances.

#### **6.2.4 Summary of perspectives**

Armstrong (2014) argued that the way in which teachers categorise children will have an impact on the way they respond to them. There is a likelihood that teachers will base their expectations for how the children behave on these opinions. In this section I have suggested that Val's view, that Simon could be "*shocking*" (A:V:1) and that he seemed to be able to choose his behaviour, could be categorised as aligning with the 'bad' perspective, and Val did make references to how her teaching was impacted upon as a result of his behaviour and her feelings towards that behaviour. Yasmin's views of David could be categorised as demonstrating the 'mad' perspective. She described an inevitability about what he did and referred more to the challenges he faced rather than the impact this had on her teaching. Izzy, on the other hand, seemed to feel sorry for the children. The 'sad' stories she told prompted her to reflect on how she and her colleagues were able to provide nurturing support.

Not all the teachers who took part in this study demonstrated similar perceptions, however. Rose, for example, presented a less emotional view of

the children she described and it was difficult to attribute her attitudes about their behaviour to any of the categories described by Macleod (2006).

The teachers working in the same school, however, seemed to refer to children in similar ways. Nicole, who worked with Izzy, also talked about the vulnerability of the children in her class. She described the way in which she worked with some of the children's parents and how she hoped that this would improve their parenting skills and the support they gave their children. Claire, who worked in the same school as Val, also seemed to share the opinion that some of the children in her class had a tendency to choose to be naughty and this suggested that she also had the perception that some children were 'bad'. Whilst it is impossible to generalise based on such small numbers of teachers, it may be that different ways of interpreting SEBD existed in different schools.

In addition to the three perceptions of SEBD suggested by Macleod (2006) the data suggested that there was another way in which teachers perceived children's behaviour. This alternate perception, described as 'immature' is discussed in the next section.

#### **6.2.5 'Immature'**

As I talked with the teachers in this study, it became apparent that the 'mad/bad/sad' perspectives that they may demonstrate in relation to the behaviours of some of the children they worked with were insufficient. The teachers also talked about how some children were considered to be 'immature' or that they felt their levels of development were below the age expected levels identified within the curriculum guidance.

Robinson (2011) suggested that this is an alternative way of perceiving SEBD and claimed that theories of child development may explain atypical behaviours. I have used 'immature' as a pithy description for what Robinson described. This alternate view could be considered to incorporate all three of the categories proposed by Macleod, and suggests that immaturity in development can be

demonstrated by children through ‘mad’, ‘bad’ or ‘sad’ behaviours. Robinson (2011) argued that excessive or withdrawn behaviours could be a result of neurological, physical, social, cognitive or emotional gaps that have occurred during a child’s early childhood.

Some of the teachers in this study referred to such gaps in development. Rose commented that a child was “*just not mature enough*” (C:R:1); Izzy referred to children who “*have missed their early milestones* [expected assessment achievements] (B:I:1) and she also explained that “*there is something developmental going on there*” (B:I:1) when she described one child. Some of the teachers also described things that the children had done which they seemed to feel were indicative of immaturity. For example, Yasmin talked about how some children were not able to sit on chairs correctly, or that they ate with their hands instead of using cutlery. Amy described a child who was finding it difficult to work in pairs with other children, and Claire referred to the child who crawled under the tables. These examples of behaviour did not seem to be linked to the ‘mad’, ‘bad’ or ‘sad’ perspectives, but suggested that the teachers felt that the children just did not have the skills or knowledge to behave differently.

In this section I have explored how the teachers appeared to position themselves in response to different ways of perceiving SEBD. The teachers appeared, based on how I interpreted what they told me, to shape their responses to the children in light of how they felt about their behaviours. The teachers talked about curriculum expectations and how they felt these were or were not appropriate for meeting the children’s needs. Their ideas about what a curriculum should look like varied according to the different ways in which they perceived SEBD. In the next section I consider how teachers view the current curriculum, and then go on to reflect on how they say they need to develop or adapt it so that it meets the needs of children with SEBD in Section 6.5.

### **6.3 An appropriate curriculum?**

As explored in Chapter 2, the statutory *National Curriculum* in primary schools (2013) consists of subject specific programmes of study which are progressively more complex. There is an assumption that as the children develop in age and understanding they will become more knowledgeable. This means that the teachers' planning and delivery of lessons must take into account prior learning. Teachers need to have an understanding of what the children know and ensure that the next steps are relevant and appropriate. However, the success of this curriculum is reliant on children making progress according to age related expectations. Teachers also shared their concerns about a curriculum which has been described as 'one-size-fits-all' (Oliver, 1990) and argued that it did not seem to fit some of the children in their classes. This section explores the teachers' perspectives on how far they felt the current national curriculum was appropriate for children categorised as having SEBD and what they felt would be more appropriate, or did, to complement that curriculum.

All of the teachers in the study referred to social and emotional skills albeit to different extents. They described how they felt some children had limited or inadequate social or emotional skills. For example, Izzy referred to them as "*little basic life skills that they'd not got*" (B:I:1) such as talking with each other, sharing, and playing together. Rose explained that without such skills the children were less likely to make academic progress. There seemed to be a feeling that certain skills needed to exist before the children could access the learning in the classroom. Therefore, to enable children to learn the subject knowledge detail within the current curriculum, the teachers felt they first needed to develop the skills associated with learning. These skills would be considered to be part of a pastoral curriculum as described by Alexander (2010) and referred to in Chapter 2.7. Yasmin described a series of sessions she had devised for children to develop such skills where they "*do a lot of role play, you know, learning how to say hello, how are you and making eye contact*" (D:Y:2). She said that it was necessary to broaden the scope of the school provision in order to incorporate this pastoral element, "*we were looking at all the different things ... all aspects of them as a child ... so it's the academic side, the engagement side, and their social and emotional that goes in there as well*" (D:Y:2). Yasmin reflected on how the needs of the children impacted on the



teaching she and her colleagues did and how this shaped her teaching role in school. She told me that she needed to support children to learn how to learn before they could begin to develop specific subject-based knowledge,

*I think my job is to dig up the soil to prepare the foundation again so he can learn. I'm the pre-learn bit, they've got to be in the right state to want to learn so it's no point saying he should be a level four maths (D:Y:3).*

Nicole saw her role in a similar way and explained that the benefits of helping children develop “*the characteristics of learning, the skills of learning*” will mean that they will then be “*ready to hit the national curriculum*” (B:N:1).

Val's concerns were focused more on the content of the curriculum and the challenges she faced in delivering it. She explained how the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) learning objectives did not help children to build personal and pastoral skills such as resilience. She explained that she saw her role as a teacher “*to prepare them for life, not just educational*” (A:V:2) and that personal skills were necessary for doing this. She told the story of an interaction with a child in her class that had worried her. She felt that she was not able to deliver the knowledge specified by the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) because the child was not able to learn alongside her peers effectively. Val admitted that she was worried that the way in which she had responded to the events in the story could get her into trouble,

*Where do you build resilience? Where do you build stamina? Where do you build the bit that says, you need to sit there uncomfortably for the next ten minutes, but in ten minutes if you still can't do it then I'm here to help you? ... I've got a really gobby girl in my maths group and she just never shuts up and her hand is always up and she starts by going, 'I can't do it' and I had a conversation with her last week and I said, 'that's it, it's your attitude that's rubbish and I am not coming to you every time your hand goes up, I'm just not doing it because there's 35 in the group and you, I measured it, I said you know, in this lesson you worked independently, the group, the class worked independently for 25 minutes and I came to you 9 times, so every time I come to you, that's somebody else who's hand is up that I haven't gone to and I said, I can't actually sit down and work with a group because your hand never goes down' and .. tough love there, but it's hard and I suppose, I suspect I'll probably get it*

*if it was known that that was what I was doing, but I'm not doing it, she's not doing it ... (A:V:2)*

As Val described how she felt the children's social and emotional difficulties were not addressed by the current curriculum, she began to cry. We were sitting talking in her classroom during the lunch break and she pointed to a chair where a child usually sat,

*[She] believes she is the reason her mummy and daddy split up and I am not going to teach her one to one or put her in a booster group because what she needs to do is sit there with her thumb in [cries]. You see, she still upsets me because she couldn't cope and the way is, 'you're not making progress so let's make you work a bit harder! (A:V:1)*

Val demonstrated resistance to the curriculum expectations and doubted the need for a "tick box of objectives" (A:V:2). She described how she enjoyed "watching their faces when you teach them something that changes who they are" (A:V:2) and seemed to suggest that the current curriculum did not always do that. She did not feel that some aspects of the curriculum were relevant and gave "adverbial phrases" (A:V:2) as one such example, but said that she taught it "'cos it's what I'm told I have to do but it's not how I would teach if left to my own devices" (A:V:2). Amy also chose "adverbial clauses" (A:A:1) as an example of an unnecessary learning objective. She questioned why the children were not given more opportunities to "be children" (A:A:1) and pursue their own interests. She, like Val, seemed resistant to the current curriculum and she described how she shared her opinion with the children in her class,

*I don't even want them to know what adverbial clauses are but they need to do that for the curriculum and so therefore it will make their heads hurt, and I say to them 'this will make your head hurt but we'll get through it together' Battle on! (A:A:1)*

The teachers seemed share the perspective that, in its current form, the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) was not adequate for the children who they felt had additional needs. Regardless of whether the teachers identified the issues as being due to missed prior experiences, deficits in social and emotional skills or inappropriately chosen behaviour, they questioned the content and structure

of the curriculum. They felt that children were either not able to access it because they were not ready to learn at the prescribed level of ability and knowledge detailed in the curriculum, or because their pastoral needs prevented them from doing so. In the next section, the ways in which teachers addressed the inadequacies of the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) are considered; their responses, I suggest, reflect the perspectives they presented of the children and of the learning they felt the children needed (as explored in Sections 2.4 and 2.6).

### **6.3.1 “They’re entitled to have their needs met and when they’re not, what are we going to do about it?” (D:Y:1)**

In this section I identify the dilemmas the teachers said they faced in meeting the needs of children identified as having SEBD. As explored in the previous two sections in this chapter, the teachers categorised children in relation to the needs they perceived they had. They also felt that a greater level of pastoral teaching could, to some extent, help the children to access the teaching and learning opportunities more successfully. In this section I describe what teachers suggested about the implications that this type of teaching, which could be referred to as a pastoral curriculum (Bennathan and Boxall, 1996), for the structure of the school day. This section concludes with a reflection on how a specialist curriculum for children with additional needs (Anastasiou and Kauffman, 2011) seems to be in place in some schools.

I have described how the teachers shared stories which implied they categorise children in different ways according to their social and emotional needs. During our conversations some teachers made explicit comments about how they felt the current *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) was not adequate to meet these needs. They indicated that something additional to a subject-based structure was required to ensure that the children are able to access the content of the curriculum. In the sub-section below, I consider the teachers’ comments about how the learning and teaching for the children they had identified as having SEBD needed to be different.

### 6.3.2 Building a pastoral curriculum

The list of support sessions that might be seen as supporting a pastoral curriculum the four schools provided is long. I have described the 'Circle of Friends' session I observed and the Theraplay I participated in. In addition to these, the teachers also described times during the week where nominated children were able to access specific social and emotional development activities such as:

- Small group and individual social skills<sup>11</sup>
- Circle Time (Mosley, 1998)
- Behaviour management skills (Rogers, 2009)
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL, DfE. 2005a)
- Nurture Groups (Bennathan and Boxall, 1996)
- Lego club
- Different social skills sessions with their parents
- Bereavement support
- Barnardo's support for young carers<sup>12</sup>

This list is not exhaustive and appears to be flexible and responsive in light of the needs teachers perceived the children to have at any given time. Yasmin explained that in her school, colleagues are open to new ideas and would be willing to add to their current provision, *"we do try our best, we'd do anything, you know, if someone came in and said there's a new therapy that works 'cos you've got to walk on hot coals, we'd go, 'oh well, we'll have a go'"* (D:Y:3). Yasmin's comment seems to suggest a willingness to try something new in the hope that it will be a way of effectively supporting children. Although, it may also be possible that she is hoping that solutions or therapies offered to her will provide an 'intervention' that addresses the challenges she faces in relation to supporting learners.

This inclination to provide specific support sessions was demonstrated by eight of the teachers and may go some way to attaining a holistic education for children as described by Aloni (1997). However, the teachers also suggested

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix M for a map of provision identified in each school

<sup>12</sup> Explanations of these terms and activities can be found in the glossary

that this kind of provision placed a strain on their workload and on the time available in which to incorporate them. Yasmin, Amy, Izzy, Claire, Val and Tom referred to the dilemmas of creating the capacity to do this, and for most, it seemed that lunch times were earmarked for such sessions. This time of day was also regarded to be one of the most challenging times for some children who experience social and emotional difficulties. Yasmin described some of the challenges some children faced at lunchtime and the kinds of pastoral support they have needed to put in place to address them,

*Some of them don't know how to, some of them sit with their legs up and some of them eat with their hands and it's all like a ... chimp! Some don't talk, they just stuff it in and just run outside and I just think we're missing a trick here because we're not teaching them. ... So, this was a nice day, I think it's a good mix of kids cos these are Y6s erm, but they were all just chatting about what they were going to do at playtime and it was nice, and it's strange these days that you capture stuff that we'd do naturally years ago but it's become a ... thing ... the hot dinners go with the teaching assistant and then the teaching assistant reminds the dinner lady whether they want sauce on it, or anything wet, or if they want things touching, cos some children like to have fish fingers not touching the peas, otherwise they go mad [laughs] so she goes and reminds them and then she brings them back down here and then they sit down and they have it together, so that just helps them and it reduces so much stress and they eat their dinner, they eat it, as opposed to [shrugs] ... and then they're ready for the afternoon, and it works for them (D:Y:3).*

She demonstrated that by providing this kind of support it was possible to address the difficulties the children faced and that this could reduce the possibility of emotional outbursts by the children and also prepare them successfully for the learning in the afternoon. She felt that calm children who have eaten well were more likely to return to their classrooms and cope with the afternoon lessons. Izzy and Rose described providing a similar kind of support in their schools. They were able to put many sessions into place and they, like Yasmin, felt that this had a positive impact on the way that the children subsequently accessed the learning and the curriculum. Val, Amy and Claire, however, did not mention this kind of support and this, when considered alongside the way they talked about the children in their classes who demonstrated 'bad' behaviour (Macleod, 2006) is important. It raises the possibility that perhaps the children who were not receiving such detailed

support may have felt unprepared to return to the classroom and therefore their behaviours were more challenging. Amy described how she monitored Paul's lunchtime experiences. She talked about how she found his behaviour more difficult to cope with after lunch,

*It was afternoons more than mornings and then we found out that he didn't always eat his dinner so that was a catalyst for an afternoon so we then had to monitor his dinner, but sometimes you have a ... you have to remind him to go and show someone his dinner so last week he didn't show his dinner to [the lunch time supervisor] so I said 'have you shown' 'no' so I said 'well I want to have a look' and there was like one half of the sandwich eaten and I went 'back of the class, I want that, that and that eaten' ... lunchtimes are a big struggle for him (A:A:1)*

Amy did say that Paul could go to a science club or play football at lunchtime, but it would appear that these sessions were not specifically put in place to support children with social and emotional difficulties. They may, therefore, be even more difficult for him to access if he lacks some social skills; attending clubs, or playing football and other games in the playground, require particular skills. Paul would need to communicate with the other children and negotiate his involvement in the game; he would need to understand, and adhere to the rules, and he would have to develop social relationships with the other children. Amy seemed to feel that this would be difficult for Paul to do.

Claire described how she used lunchtimes to keep children inside to complete unfinished work,

*He'd crawl across the table and spread out so nobody could do their work, I mean, he still does and in guided reading the other day he just slammed his book down and said, 'I am not doing this' and I said 'well, you can do it at lunchtime then', 'I'm not going to do it at lunchtime' (A:C:1)*

So, for Claire, this time of the day was used to keep the children inside to ensure they completed the work that they had been asked to do during lesson time; the break during the middle of the day was used by her as a sanction and a means of shaping the behaviours of the children (Skinner, 1953). This approach suggests that Claire shared Val's perspective that the child was

demonstrating 'bad' behaviour and therefore needed correcting, unlike Yasmin who seemed to identify that her lunchtime strategies were addressing the outcomes of 'mad' behaviour.

### **6.3.3 Nurturing support**

All the teachers described the need for a pastoral curriculum for the children they taught who were identified with SEBD. The teachers in schools B, C and D appeared to have developed a specialist curriculum, to varying degrees for some children in their schools, and this could be an example of the type of responsive and appropriate curriculum which Anastasiou and Kauffman (2011) argue should be in place. These three schools had embedded the nurture group principles (Bennathan and Boxall, 1996; see Section 2.6) and the children in these schools were able to access specific sessions to enable them to develop social and emotional skills. The fourth school, where Val, Amy and Claire taught, did not have a nurture group.

It was not possible for me to observe any nurture group sessions and I would probably have declined the opportunity had it been presented to me. The intention is that children in such groups are provided with a safe environment in which they feel comfortable. This is usually achieved by developing a routine of activities that are completed with the same adults and children each week (Boxall and Lucas, 2010). My presence in such a session would have been unethical, could have been intrusive, and may have caused the children to feel unsure and uncomfortable. However, the creation of a safe environment, away from the classroom, could be problematic for the children and their class teachers in terms of school and classroom management. There may be a risk that by excluding children from their mainstream classrooms and putting them in nurture groups, their relationships with their peers and classroom teacher could be affected (Clough, 2005). Izzy and Rose described how they put strategies in place to ensure that the relationship between the class teacher and child is maintained and that the children attended the nurture group for only part of the day and then returned to their classroom for the remainder of the time. They

felt that this needed to be managed carefully to ensure that integration back into the classroom was successful, but that without attendance in the nurture group the children would not be able to take part in the mainstream classroom teaching effectively. Rose explained how she felt this worked for one child in her school, *“there's a lot of work going from class to nurture and from nurture back up to class to try and strengthen that because in her case she was better when she went back in than she had been before”* (C:R:2).

The teachers expressed different views about how far the use of nurture groups worked positively to include children. Rose, for example felt, that there were potential problems in children leaving the mainstream classrooms to attend nurture groups. Rose described how she carefully managed the transitions between nurture and mainstream learning,

*What staff are a lot better at doing now is actually keeping that relationship with that child because in the past when it was more reactive and it might have been behaviour led, it was kind of, phew, they've gone out to nurture, but at some point they had to come back and if there was no relationship built ... we thought we'd solved it, you put them back in class and they went back again, whereas now, we're doing a lot of work on teachers visiting nurture group, mentors visiting classrooms, keeping the link going between planning work that they're producing in the nurture group displayed in the classroom so they still feel very much part of the class and then when they move back into the class it's hopefully, well it's not as disruptive.* (C:R:1).

Yasmin, Izzy and Rose felt that the nurturing principles and pastoral curriculum associated with nurture groups were effective in promoting greater access to the mainstream *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) and that a brief exclusion from the classroom results in more effective inclusive learning in the long run,

*like the little girl who's just shown us the space pictures ...we pulled her back into nurture and all the work that she's doing now is all about, yes, she's doing her work with everyone else, but she's getting a lot of time and a lot of conversation with the mentors on 'so when you go back to your classroom, this is what you're doing' so there's a lot of work going from class to nurture and from nurture back up to class* (C:R:2).



## 6.4 Summary

In this chapter, the stories told by teachers about the children they teach have provided insight into the diverse ways in which they view them. Val, Yasmin and Izzy seem to demonstrate that different perspectives of SEBD, as defined by Macleod (2006), could be relevant to the different ways in which teachers regard the children and develop their teaching as a result. I have also suggested that perspectives on 'immaturity', as described by Robinson (2011), may frame the way in which teachers view some children. The teachers' stories also suggest that they feel the current *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) is not adequate to meet the needs of all the children they teach. The 'one-size-fits-all' curriculum does not support the learning or development of social and emotional skills for some children. Therefore, alternative teaching approaches and content are developed by teachers like Yasmin, Rose, Nicole and Izzy.

While this chapter has explored teachers' perspectives on children identified as having SEBD and their ideas about the kinds of provision that might be appropriate, the next chapter explores their experiences of attempting to make this provision against the complex background of accountability and assessment outlined in Chapter 2.

## **Chapter 7: Pressure: “I do my best and I can’t give any more than that”**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I consider teachers’ perspectives on the pressures they feel they face when working as classroom teachers.

Chapter 2 identifies four aspects pertinent to this chapter: policy directives, curriculum expectations, perspectives of SEN and SEBD, and teacher perspectives. Day and Kington (2008) identified that the pressures teachers experienced as result of carrying out the tasks linked to their roles could have a direct correlation with their perception of their professional identity and feelings of how effective they are in doing their job. Osborn, McNess and Broadfoot (2000) also recognised that these tasks, and the pressures they felt as a result of completing them could affect their practice within the classroom. In light of these views, I have considered what the teachers told me about what they do, their workload and how they felt this impacted upon them.

### **7.2 The pressures of being a teacher in the current education system**

During the course of conversations, a range of themes emerged when the teachers were talking about their roles. They referred to the number of expectations placed on them as part of their day to day work and how this led to feeling pressured. Some of the comments and events they described focused on the actual activities that they needed to do in order to complete the requirements of teaching. These activities included planning, preparation and marking, whilst others linked to the additional workload they experienced as a direct result of working with children identified as having SEBD. The teachers gave the impression that these tasks, whilst typical aspects of their role, did not always mean that they viewed what they did in the same way. Some teachers seemed to view the tasks positively whilst others referred to them in frustrated tones and indicated that they were resistant to what they did. In each of the following subsections I describe examples of what the teachers said they did.

These have been categorised into: general teaching duties; additional pressures of supporting learners identified with SEBD; working with parents; and the impact this has had on how they felt about their role as a teacher. In each case I sketch out the different ways in which participants viewed these different aspects of their role.

### **7.2.1 General teaching duties**

Many of the comments made by teachers about the heavy workload they experience reflect the findings of the DfE Workload Survey (2010) and the NUT survey (2014) discussed in Chapter 3. Like the teachers who participated in Troman's (2008) and Ball's (2003) research, the teachers in this study all reflected on the challenges they experienced when trying to organise and cope with the many tasks they needed to complete; they talked about how this placed pressure on their time and organisation. Claire, a year five teacher, talked with me for nine minutes during her lunch break. She continued to move around the classroom doing tasks (picking up books, cleaning whiteboards, moving chairs) whilst we talked. In hindsight, it was not surprising that she chose to talk about how much work there was to do. In my experience as a primary teacher in the past, the time between morning and afternoon lessons were invariably spent tidying up after the previous lesson and preparing for the next and so it is likely that this would have been on her mind. My presence at that time was not insensitive though – Claire had suggested that particular time for me to go to her classroom, but there was no doubt that she was busy. As I discussed in Section 5.6, Hogan's guidance (1988) had helped me to reflect on my place as a researcher in the field and the importance of being aware of the experiences of the participants. This meeting provided the opportunity for me to demonstrate my attempts at being supportive and appreciative of the work she needed to continue to do whilst we talked. Therefore, I tried to help by also picking up paper and pencils from the floor and pushing chairs under tables, but as I did not know where things went or what needed setting up for the lesson, it was more of a gesture of support than useful. It did seem to provide a less formal atmosphere for our conversation though and was preferable to sitting

opposite each other with a Dictaphone between us. As Claire put a pile of exercise books into a large shopping bag, she sighed and said,

*I've still got last week's marking that I haven't done yet and I've got science next, I've got to plan an investigation to do with evaporation, too many, too many things ... (A:C:1)*

Claire talked about the way in which the many tasks she was required to complete overwhelmed her at times. She said she was behind with her marking and felt the pressure of planning and preparation for future lessons. The workload prevented her from taking a break and she felt she could not “switch off” at home. She described the amount of marking she had to do as “horrific” and explained that this had an impact on the amount of time she could spend with her own two children. She explained that,

*... every night I go home and work. I try and give them some attention, but I've got, you know, a good chunk of things to do when I get home and then at the weekend I work, both days, so I never switch off. I mean, even in the holidays there's stuff to do. (A:C:1)*

Claire, who worked with Val and Amy, had met briefly with me during my initial visit to the school when I introduced the study. Val had already told me about how Claire had recently been signed off work for several weeks due to stress and exhaustion and that this was only her second or third week back at work. They seemed to share the feeling of having too much to do and not enough time in which to do it all. Nias (1989) had identified in her research that teachers talked about the pressures they experienced as part of the typical day to day job. This, based on what the teachers shared with me, is still an issue twenty-five years later. The teachers in my study talked about how they coped with the workload and sometimes complained about it, but on the whole described how they control it to make it manageable. Amy described the first few weeks of term, “I'm coping far more than I was! By week three I was in tears and didn't think I could do the job any more but I've pulled myself out of that” (A:A:1).

Amy's acceptance that the teacher's role came with a heavy workload seemed to be evident in many other conversations in this study; every teacher referred

to this, but the way in which Amy coped is interesting. Claire talked about “... *having to ...*” (A:C:1) which hinted at the feeling of having to respond to what needed to be done, whereas Amy said, “*I’ve pulled myself out*” (A:A1), that is, she implied she had made it happen and had taken control of the workload and the tasks involved. She referred to there being many things to do but rather than letting them overwhelm her, she explained how she needed to feel in control, “*I’m constantly trying to make sure I’m doing all of those things rather than just letting it go in a natural flow*” (A:A:1).

Like Amy, Nicole also demonstrated a desire to be proactive and in control of her workload. Our conversation began in a communal room and continued as we walked along the corridor towards Nicole’s classroom. We talked for three quarters of an hour. She seemed to accept that the job involved hard work and a heavy workload and talked about it with positivity and confidence. At times, she pointed her finger, banged her fist on the table and sounded as if she was giving a speech. She even laughed at her comments and said that she sounded like a politician. It was as if the point she was making was ‘this is how it is and this is how I am, deal with it!’

*It’s not perfect in there nothing ever is, but I do what I think is right. I do my best and I can’t give any more than that ... you have to stand up to what comes in. I’m not saying you have to ignore it and I’m not saying that you don’t have to try and get there, but you have to try and work with it* (B:N:1).

Nicole referred to the importance of maintaining an organised and tidy learning environment several times. She explained her system for labelling resources for the children and how this was beneficial for her teaching and their learning. This is similar to the control Amy sought, though, rather than having control over her actions like Amy, Nicole controlled the classroom environment. Nicole acknowledged, however, that others might interpret this control differently, but did not say who the ‘others’ were,

*Well, like some people OK, they think, some people, that I’ve got OCD [obsessive compulsive disorder] because I have things in a certain way,*

*OK, but everything I do has a reason why ... I have to be sorted, I can't think if everything is messy. I say, clean place: clean mind (B:N:1).*

In the first extract, Nicole did not give specific examples of what she needed to “*stand up to*” or what had to be ignored. My reflection on our conversation was that we both assumed a shared understanding about the teaching role. I felt that she and I had built up a comfortable rapport as we talked and we had shared anecdotes about our teaching experiences. My position as a former teacher enabled me to respond with knowledge and understanding of what Nicole was talking about (MacLure, 2013). Nicole would end some of her descriptions or sentences with “*you know*” (B:N:1), assuming that I would appreciate what she was referring to. In the majority of cases, I felt that I did understand what she was talking about. For me, based on my prior experiences as a teacher and on the general context of our conversation, I believe that Nicole was talking about standing up to the expectations and pressures of the job. She presented the impression that her approach was a positive ‘get on with it and do your best’ one. There are similarities with Amy’s perspectives, but less so with Claire’s. Claire presented herself as an overwhelmed teacher who found that the expectations and workload affected her personal life and left her feeling dissatisfied with what she was “*having*” (A:C:1) to do.

The teachers’ comments included in this section highlight some of the challenges they faced on a day to day basis when supporting the children in their classrooms. They all made many references to having a heavy workload but seemed to present two broad approaches for managing this. They either developed coping mechanisms centred around the control of the classroom organisation, their planning and preparation and their feelings and responses to what they were doing; or they said that they could not cope and presented negative views about what they did.

### **7.2.2 The additional pressures of supporting learners exhibiting challenging behaviours**

Seven of the nine teachers talked about the challenges and negative impact they experienced when teaching children with a range of additional needs. I encouraged each teacher to tell me about the children in their class. Val, Bea, Rose and Yasmin described the range of learning, social or emotional difficulties that they had identified and gave the numbers of children who were considered to have special educational needs. Val commented on how the broad range of learning needs in her class affected her teaching,

*... so, I've got 31 [in the class]. I've got 12 IEPs, 3 statements, Simon, and it's quite a lot to manage ... it's really hard cos it means that the child who ten years ago would have got a lot of support gets none because they get lost in this mêlée and that has an effect (A:V:1).*

Yasmin referred to the way in which class teachers can “*get a bit swamped if they've got loads of kids like that*” (D:Y:3) and Rose acknowledged that this placed “*an extra pressure*” (C:R:1) on planning and resources. The teachers talked about how this resulted in needing to plan widely differentiated lessons so that they could support the children to make continuous learning progress from their individual starting points. Val explained that although this added to her workload, it was not problematic. As she reflected on over twenty years of teaching, she described that the added pressure came from not being able to predict what was going to happen when teaching children identified as having SEBD and that this meant she could not plan effectively,

*I mean there's definitely more special needs and that makes a difference because you have to differentiate your work so closely to address their needs but I think that in a way it's a shame because the EBD children, often, they're not your first thought; when you're in class they're your first thought because they're the ones that are going to disrupt, but when you're planning or preparing for your day's work and thinking about them, I'm not thinking about Simon's access to the curriculum because when he's in his head he can do it (A:V:1).*

Amy and Bea described events that they experienced when working with particular children who had demonstrated challenging behaviours. They felt that such events disrupted the teaching and learning of the other children in the class,

*For about half a term I didn't get through a lesson without having to speak to him or without there being a disturbance ... it would be him and then somebody else would go and it was literally just playing jack in a box and bouncing the ones down to try and actually get through something (A:A:1).*

*There's two on the SEN register that are like identified as being SEBD but then there's a lot of them who if they were in a different classroom I think they would be, but it's just because there are so many children that they are just part of the class, it's relative, yes. So, I would say that there are probably about eight children in that room that are challenging. No, there's a lot of them ... there's a lot of them in there that don't have a particularly good time of it ... and that becomes a huge issue for me and so that has to be managed (B:B:1).*

These comments reflected Jones, West and Stevens' (2006) research findings about teachers' workloads. They described how the teaching role, already acknowledged to be difficult, was even harder when the needs of children identified with SEBD are added to the mix. Jones, West and Stevens (2006) concluded that high levels of stress contributed to uncertainty, resistance and increased attrition rates amongst the teachers. Val, who cried when she described how difficult she found the job, said that being a teacher is "*part of your DNA*" (A:V:2) but that the job was getting more stressful. She felt that this stress was the reason "*why people my age go [leave the profession]*" (A:V:2). She also raised concerns that stress may be having an impact on new teachers in the early stages of their careers, "*you have to hope that the desire that's within them to make a difference and to make the lives of children matter is enough to keep them going through the shit*" (A:V:2). She gave the example of a teacher in her school who had recently qualified but had chosen to leave teaching. She said that he was going to do a job where "*he's going to earn just as much money and not have to work 65 hours a week or be responsible for the emotional and educational well-being of children*" (A:V:2). For Val, the pressures and expectations of teaching had resulted in people leaving the profession.

Bea identified an aspect that she felt could impact on how she taught specific children. As I observed her working with her Year 5 class one afternoon, she appeared to be constantly scanning the room and looking out for particular



children. She talked to two children more than any of the others and regularly checked that they were where they should be and doing what she had asked them to do. I returned to her classroom at the end of the day so that we could talk about the lesson I observed and she told me more about the two children. She explained that she had given them a daily task in which they checked the home/school reading logs of their peers to make sure they had been signed by parents. She felt that this task was a way of keeping them focused on the job in hand and made them feel as if they were 'special helpers'. Bea said that this gave them the attention they craved and she seemed to believe that this was necessary as they did not receive enough attention at home.

*The thing I find difficult is that you don't know what's gone on before they have stepped into your classroom door and sometimes ... so Jack has a challenging home life and sometimes he will come in and straight away he will do something that he knows he shouldn't do just so he gets some attention, just so that I'll talk to him even if it's me saying 'no', which is why that job he was doing when they were reading ... he's doing something special ... just to give him a bit of an opportunity to do things*  
(B:B:1)

Bea was not the only teacher to correlate the challenging behaviours of some of the children with their experiences in their home lives. Every single teacher, except Claire, talked about the links between the children with social, emotional and/or behavioural needs and their parents. The teachers attributed some of the behaviours they dealt with in the classroom to the child's experiences at home, to their upbringing or because they felt that the parents had social, emotional and/or behavioural needs too. This, they explained, added to the pressures of teaching children identified as having SEBD and also added to their workload because they needed to support parents as well as the children.

The conversations with the teachers suggested that they all felt pressures in their role that were exacerbated by the additional needs they felt they had to meet for some children. However, these pressures seemed to be different. Amy talked about the pressures of getting through the curriculum when faced with constant interruptions. Val described the dilemmas she faced when planning for lessons; there were pressures on her time to plan for differentiated

learning, and there were also tensions because her planning did not, and could not, prepare for Simon's disruptive behaviour. Bea also referred to the number of children who were likely to exhibit disruptive behaviour in her classroom. She felt that the tensions of supporting some children centred around the unpredictability of the moods and behaviours of the children when they arrived at school each morning.

Each teacher experienced tensions brought about by the pressures of supporting learners who they identified as having SEBD. The tensions were different for each of them. The comment made by Bea about not knowing what to expect each morning when the children arrived seemed to suggest that further pressures and tensions arise as a result of the experiences children have in their homes. This is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

### **7.2.3 The pressures of supporting the parents of children identified as having SEBD**

Every teacher, apart from one, talked about the necessity of providing support to the parents of the children identified as having SEBD. In this section I reflect on the way the teachers made links between the needs of the children and the parenting they felt they experienced. I then consider what teachers said about the impact this had on their role.

I listened to many narratives about children during my visits to schools for this research. Teachers seemed eager to describe the needs of the children and often made links to their familial experiences. It became apparent that they felt that support needed to be given to the parents in order to help the children. Nicole felt that without this wider support the children were less likely to access the teaching, make progress, and reach the targets of achievement that she set for them.

*There are problems in a way that are literacy skills, parenting, family routines, and we can't get these numbers without looking beyond the*

*child so if I can help these parents that might help a few more and then help my children [in her class] (B:N:1)*

Rose, a class teacher and SENCo in School C, confirmed that specific support sessions, discussions and guidance was needed to help the children's parents,

*Obviously, the child spends most of their time with the parents don't they, and if the parents weren't quite at the level with their confidence, or maybe with their understanding of how the child was feeling ... we put the support in with the parents as well (C:R:1).*

She did not explicitly judge the parents' abilities to support their children's learning, but the breadth of additional parenting sessions she felt needed to be provided suggested that she felt they needed to develop their parenting and academic skills. Yasmin, a teacher and SENCo like Rose, talked at length about the social and emotional difficulties that some of the children faced. She made a direct correlation between these difficulties and their home lives. She also provided many examples where she felt the parents also had social and emotional difficulties. Yasmin certainly used the issues experienced by parents as one of the causes for the children needing to access additional support in school. She gave examples such as "dad's behaviour", "Mum abusing dad, hitting him with things", or "Mum can't leave the house" (D:Y:1). Each of the examples did have an impact on the teaching, she said, and as a result, support packages needed to be put in place. For Yasmin, what might start out as the identification of a child struggling to learn could soon escalate into more wide-ranging issues,

*We have IEP meetings about special needs and then we end up talking about home life and a child who's still sleeping with his Mum when he's eleven, really, and it's always been that way and we can't do anything else, and then we're having to unpick it and they're crying and it's like, 'Hey, hang on, we're not trying to tell you how to parent but it's a bit wrong now that this is going on.' (D:Y:1).*

So, there is a belief, for most of the teachers, that inadequate parenting may lead to SEBD. This links to the view, explored in Section 2.3 about children who are perceived as being 'sad' (Macleod, 2006; Wright, 2009; Robinson, 2011), that the inadequacies of the children are often attributed to poor welfare

resulting from an ineffective societal structure. This links to Macleod's finding (2006) that some teachers used the 'sad' perspective to describe children who exhibited atypical behaviours in terms of their social upbringing and backgrounds. Such teachers felt sorry for these children because they were considered to have SEBD as a result of their prior experiences. Bruner (1971) and Carr (2003) warned against the dangers of using education to shape, change or improve social and welfare issues, but the teachers in this study seemed to believe that in order to enable the children to learn and make progress, the parents also needed to be supported. This, they felt would have an impact on parenting and social skills. Izzy, Rose and Yasmin provided examples of the types of support they provided for some of the parents with children in their schools. In addition to working with parents with other agencies such as social services, family support workers, and MAST (multi-agency support teams), they also described sessions that the staff in the school provided, such as,

- Cooking mornings
- Family workshops
- Parenting skills classes
- Parents' literacy classes
- Parents' maths groups
- Drop in sessions
- Parent forum<sup>13</sup>

In addition to these, Izzy and Yasmin also gave examples where they had accompanied parents to appointments with the Doctor or CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service). Whilst some of these examples of provision may be provided by non-teaching colleagues in school (Izzy referred to them as the pastoral team), the staff in the school were attempting to establish an environment that acknowledged that the school was there to support more than just the children on their registers.

Examples of how specific parents were seen as needing additional support were wide ranging. Parents were either categorised by the teachers as inadequate parents or as having social and emotional needs themselves like their children. In relation to the former, Val sounded incredulous when she

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<sup>13</sup> See appendix M for a map of provision identified in each school

described an email she had received from a parent of a child in her class. She explained that the parent had contacted her asking if their child had homework because the child said not, but she wanted to check with Val. Val said this meant that she would now have to “*engage with them by email on a weekly basis ‘cos of course he had homework last week but he pulls the wool over her eyes ... despite the fact that a fortnight ago I said to her at parent’s evening ‘he has homework every week’*” (A:V:2). This frustration for Val seemed to link not only to additional workload, but also to how she felt that the parent should not need to ask her, and that she felt pressured to support them in addition to the child. For Yasmin, reasons why parents needed to be supported to parent their children were linked to a broader spectrum of social issues. She became very animated when she talked about how some parents did not seem to be able to carry out their role effectively.

*... we are living in little vacuums where we don’t go out and mix, these kids sit on their Xboxes every night and they don’t go out and play like we did and sort their own problems out. We’ve got these helicopter parents who are going ‘are you happy? No, oh, I’d better go and talk to school about it then ‘cos it’s obviously nothing to do with us as a family’. If more parents reflected back on how they parented, you know, you sit in meetings and parents quite honestly say ‘well, they won’t go to bed ‘cos the telly’s on till 11 o’clock at night in their bedroom’ and you’re thinking, ‘take the plug off, you’re the adult ...’ but they don’t want to be, they want to be mates don’t they, they want to be mates with their kids but they have to be, they have to make grown up decisions about their child and if the child’s not happy with me then I’ll cave in and I’ll buy them that Xbox game that they shouldn’t have because they’re not 18!* (D:Y:1).

Her concerns were that children and their parents now have relationships that are not as effective as they used to be (she refers to what it was like “*twenty years ago*”, (D:Y:1)). She stated that this had a direct impact on what she felt she needed to do as part of her role as a teacher. One reason she gave for needing to provide support for parents was that the parents had social and emotional needs themselves. This perspective was reflected in several other comments in the data. Izzy and Yasmin used the term “*needy*” (D:Y:1; B:I:1) to describe the parents; though Yasmin did distinguish this as “*attention needing*” (D:Y:1). She talked about how some parents “*would bleed us dry talking about their child*” but that “*it’s your need, not your child’s*” (DY:1). However, Rose

seemed to be suggesting that this was because she felt the parents needed extra support to help them cope with the knowledge and practicalities of parenting a child who has learning and behavioural issues. Both Izzy and Rose ensured that they were available for drop in sessions for parents each week. They had structured the timetable so that they could be in the playground at the start of the day so that they could respond to any parent who wanted to talk to them. Rose felt that,

*some of our families and parents are so draining ... I can sometimes have sat in the office with a mum for twenty minutes or half an hour and when they've gone I don't know what they needed to see me for other than the fact that it was just a general 'I need to sit down and talk to somebody today who is just going to listen and make the right noises in the right places' but there wasn't a particular issue that they needed me to solve or a question about their child, they just needed that time to off load really and be nurtured (C:R:2).*

Yasmin described the reputation she felt the children and their parents had given her. She recalled a conversation with a child who called her "*the mum at [school name]*" and that the "*kids will say, 'oh, I come to you don't I if I'm not very happy'*" (D:Y:1). It was not just the children who regarded her as this though, she described how a "*mum came to me and said, do I come to you if I'm not very happy?*" (D:Y:1). These examples suggest that some of the teachers who participated in this study felt they were providing nurturing care to parents as well as the children.

This section has reflected on what the teachers said about working with parents. Val, Amy, Rose, Yasmin, Bea, Nicole and Tom considered this to be part of their role and some of them suggested that the nurturing provision they have in schools for the children permeated through to the way they supported parents. They seemed to feel that without this additional input for the parents, the children would be less likely to make progress and achieve the goals and targets that they set. This suggested that teachers felt a responsibility for shaping the knowledge, understanding and emotional well-being of whole families and not just the children in their classrooms. Nicole confirmed that supporting families so that they would be more capable of caring for their

children was her goal and that such support could have longer term repercussions for the children in her class. She felt that by improving the circumstances for some families their future could be improved.

*I'm trying to educate somebody to live in a community where they'll be safe, happy, aspire, inspire, aim high, you know, and actually do alright in life for themselves, get what they want and actually, hopefully get more, then I will have done my job! There you go! (B:N:1).*

### **7.3 How teachers see themselves**

In this section I shall consider the way in which teachers talked about themselves, exploring connections between teachers' self-image, personal identity and sense of professional efficacy (Day and Kington (2008; Kelchtermans, 2009). These connections are explored in three sub-sections. The first considers teachers talking about 'doing their best' and wanting to make a difference to the lives of the children. The second focuses on self-awareness; including their reflections of what they did, how effective they felt they were and their critique of their own practice. The third section then describes how some teachers seemed to be emotionally attached to what they did and how this stayed with them after the school day was over.

#### **7.3.1 Making a difference**

Yasmin described feeling fulfilled in her role and that she felt as if she was good at her job. She described how she felt that she had been successful in supporting children with additional needs in her school. She referred to the annual meetings she has with the SENCo at the local secondary school and who had given her positive feedback about the provision she implemented in her primary school. These meetings gave her the opportunity to list the specific strategies and approaches that she put into place for the children in her school and she felt that such support was, on the whole, successful. She seemed happy in her role and summed up what she did and said, "*It's the best job in the world i'n't it*" (D:Y:1). Despite her concerns that the efforts she made may not

be enough to improve the experiences for all children, she still said that she could not stop teaching because *“it’s just lovely”* (D:Y:3). She recognised that she and her colleagues *“can’t wave magic wands”* and that *“we’re just sticking plasters”* but that *“we do try our best”* (D:Y:3). Nicole shared the same view and commitment to the role and said *“I do what I think is right, I do my best and I can’t give any more than that”* (B:N:1). She, Yasmin, Rose and Izzy gave specific examples of children’s achievements that they felt they had encouraged or made happen and the positivity they felt as a result was palpable. They seemed to link their successes to their feelings of being effective in their jobs. Whether the feedback was verbal, or identified in the success and achievement completed by the children, they suggested that their self-esteem and self-image was enhanced through these positive experiences. The view, suggested by Kelchtermans (2009) - that professional identity is linked to good feedback, a positive self-image and success - was shared by these teachers. However, the feedback did not just come from the children. As mentioned in the previous section, each of these teachers also described the work they did with parents. Yasmin described the positive feedback she has received from families. While, as explored above, she felt that some families were ‘needy’ and *“attention needing”* (D:Y:1), those were the families most likely to engage with her and the support she offered them. Yasmin felt that their positive responses to the support confirmed that she was effective in her role and this enhanced her positive self-image and identity. However, some teachers who took part in this study did not feel the same sense of achievement. Val, Amy, Claire and Bea talked more about the challenges they faced than of successes. They described difficult interactions with the children they identified as having SEBD. They did not seem to have the same feelings of satisfaction and none of them talked in any detail about how much they enjoyed what they did.

### **7.3.2 Being self-aware**

Some of the teachers talked about their need to manage their own actions and responses to the children in order to improve their teaching. It seemed that they looked to themselves to find a reason for why teaching was so challenging. For



example, Bea explained that her own responses to the children who were struggling to engage effectively could sometimes be unhelpful or make a situation worse.

*I can tell when I'm tired, I know that my behaviour management is not as good as it should be and then I feel like ... not doing the best for the children and then it's like 'oh god, I need to turn it, I need to make sure I'm on' ... So I find that really difficult (B:B:1).*

Val shared this sense of responsibility in relation to how she handled difficult interactions with Simon in her class. She recognised that the level of effort required to maintain an effective interaction with him could fluctuate, but that failure to do this successfully was down to her,

*Some days you do it for you, some days you do it just because you've got to get through this day and therefore your strategies reflect that and other days you're doing it because you're better or you're more in your head where you're consciously thinking, 'What difference can I make? What does this child need at this minute?' (A:V:1).*

Bea did not seem to attribute the difficult interactions with the children directly to the behaviour exhibited. She acknowledged that the children may have SEBD and that this may explain why some events in the classroom could be difficult. However, she seemed to take responsibility for the outcome of the interactions and when challenges had not been resolved, she attributed this to her own poor behaviour management. Bea highlighted what seemed to be an internal debate about a child's behaviour and her own responses very clearly,

*Yes, yes, when I catch myself saying why have you done that to a child, which is just the most unhelpful thing cos they did it cos they wanted to why else would they do it, that's a stupid question to ask them and when you do, I do always try and be self-aware of well that's not a helpful thing, say something helpful rather than saying something totally irrelevant yeah, but when you're tired that's when it is hardest to be self-aware (B:B:1).*

These comments suggest that Bea felt responsible for what she did and this, according to Hargreaves (1998), demonstrated that she invested emotionally as well as academically and physically in her job.

#### 7.4 A particular type of teacher?

Bea and Nicole discussed how some teachers may be more suited to teaching in the current education system. Nicole talked about how her drive and passion motivated her. She recognised that the pressures could be “*draining, emotionally, physically, mentally, all of it, but if you have got in your gut why you’re here and what you believe in, that’s more important than being tired*” (B:N:1). However, she saw this as being specific to “*working in a school like this*” (B:N:1). This perception, that some schools are more likely to have learners who are identified as having SEBD on their roll, is mentioned several times. The teachers seemed to feel that some schools needed teachers with particular skills: teaching children who live in a ‘challenging area’ requires a specific type of teacher.

Bea felt that some of the challenges were particular to schools in particular geographical areas – those that are considered to be economically or socially disadvantaged. Rose seemed to imply that schools situated in communities with a “*deprived intake*” (C:R:1) were more likely to teach children exhibiting social and emotional difficulties. The important point to make about this is that some of the teachers thought that a particular set of teaching or personal characteristics were required in order to support the children living in such areas. Some of the teachers in this study saw themselves as being different to those who they described as working in schools that they considered to be more affluent.

*I think children in leafy green where your mam meets you every night and where they’re bought loads of stuff, they don’t need someone who tries their best and works their hardest ‘cos you could be an alright teacher and still make progress, whereas here you need to kind of work your socks off to get the kids to move half as much* (B:B:1).

Nicole said that “*it’s kind of brave to work in a setting like this*” (B:N:1). Izzy talked at length about the amount of hard work that the staff put into their jobs. She described, four times, how she and her colleagues “*go above and beyond*”

(B:I:1) and that she felt this was a typical part of the role in her school. I asked her if there were colleagues who “*don’t want to do the over and above*” (B:I:1) and she explained that any teacher with this attitude was not going to be suitable for her school, “*you don’t succeed ... because they’re not the right, they’re not the right person for the job, there’s a type*” (B:I:1).

#### **7.4.1 Special and different**

The teachers talked about the ways in which they developed a pastoral curriculum for the children who they had identified as not being able to access the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013). It appeared that some of the participants saw such work as distinct from their regular teaching duties, and different from work done by other teachers. They did not just consider some children to be different to their peers; some of them also saw themselves and their roles as being different to those of other teachers. Yasmin referred to herself as “*special*” (D:Y:1) when describing what she did. Yasmin’s joke about being special is one that I have heard from other teachers before and links to the term ‘special educational needs’; the joke being that it is not just the children who are ‘special’, it is the teachers too. This joke does not imply that teachers also feel that they have special educational needs (though of course, some may feel they have), what it does seem to imply is that some children, and their teachers, see themselves as being different. This links to the comments made by Oliver and Barnes (2012) about perceptions of division within society, whereby there are those who are ‘able’ and those who are ‘disabled’. For Yasmin, it seems that she is happy to describe herself as being special, and therefore different from other teachers and that she, and the children she teaches, therefore have to be regarded or treated differently. From Yasmin’s perspective, the implementation of teaching approaches and a curriculum which meets the needs of specific children, is necessary and appropriate because these children are seen as being special and different. Yasmin refers to the children’s entitlement to have their needs met and as such, their ‘special’ educational needs enable her to respond to their entitlement.

Rose explained the way in which the responsibility for curriculum and pastoral support was also divided and explained that this had an impact on her role, “[teacher’s name] is the assistant head and is responsible for the curriculum which means that all my responsibility can all be pastoral” (C:R:2). Several comments were made by other teachers where they saw their roles as being different or more difficult than other teachers. Most of the teachers provided examples of how they needed to teach skills relating to children’s social and emotional development to ensure that learning could take place. These skills are considered to be over and above what is currently included in the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) (Alexander, 2010).

So, the teachers in this study suggested that in order to be able to work with children identified as having SEBD, specific characteristics and attitudes were needed. These teachers were more likely to choose working in schools that have higher levels of deprivation and to set themselves apart from other teachers who work in “*leafy green*” (B:N:1) schools.

## **7.5 Taking their concerns home**

Not one of the teachers gave the impression that they arrived at school each day, completed a series of tasks and then went home and forgot about the job until the next day. They all referred to emotion and responsibility and wanting to make a difference, particularly for the children identified as having SEBD. They also described how they took their concerns home with them. The additional needs of the children continued to worry them and remained in their thoughts. Izzy said that she was “*never gonna go home and be able to switch off*” (B:I:2) and Claire said “*I think about it in the night, I dream about them, especially the hard ones ... I don’t sleep particularly well*” (A:C:1). Bea differentiated between talking about her teaching and the children when she discussed her day with her partner,

*I need to kind of unload my day ... I talk about the children, I don't really talk about, well I do talk about the teaching, but I do talk about the children much more, yeah ... I just need to offload (B:B:1)*

The teachers' comments indicated their feelings of responsibility for the children. They demonstrated that their role did not end when they were not with the children. Nicole described how she thought about the children when she went out for dinner with her partner one evening,

*Oh my gosh, you go out for meals and you think, gosh so and so could be here, I could be showing him how to read this menu and showing him the please and thank yous, that life goes on beyond McDonald's, you know, these children need it. It's emotional (B:N:1).*

Hargreaves (1998), Nias (1989) and Osborn, et al. (2000) identify that the high levels of responsibility directly impacts on how they feel about their role. The comments by some of the teachers in this study suggest that their role extends far beyond the contractual obligations listed in the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012). Their thoughts about the children pervade their personal lives too. Their emotional involvement (MacLure, 2003) with the children in their classrooms impacts on their thoughts, relationships with their families (Claire, A:C:1; Bea, B:B:1), social lives (Nicole, B:N:1) and even their health (Claire, A:C:1).

## **7.6 Summary**

In this chapter, the teachers' views, stories and suggestions have provided an understanding of what it is like for them to work within the current education system. In the interviews, they described the pressures they experienced as a result of their workloads and told how the tasks they completed in order to fulfil their role led to long hours that continued after the end of the school day. They described how the additional academic, social and emotional needs of the children identified with SEBD increased their workload even more. This also led to the need to provide support for the children's parents and carers to enhance the likelihood of successful learning and pupil progress. The teachers' responses to their workload and the additional support needed due to SEBD

were varied, as were their coping mechanisms. Some talked positively about how their jobs made them feel but others presented themselves as tired, disillusioned and frustrated.

The teachers had clear ideas about the specific traits they felt were needed for working with children identified as having SEBD. Some of them seemed to set themselves apart from teachers in other schools who they perceived as not having the same kinds of pressures and responsibilities as they did.

The teachers often expressed feelings of frustration and anger about the requirements of the national curriculum and other government policies. These, they felt, did not always correlate with the needs of the children they were working with. The next chapter explores teachers' stories of complying to such pressures.

## **Chapter 8: Complying: “I suspect I’ll probably get it if it was known that that was what I was doing”**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter is organised in five sections. The first explores what teachers told me about the expectations placed upon them to comply with policy directives, with a focus on age-related expectations. The second, third and fourth sections consider how the teachers positioned the children, and the children’s parents, in terms of compliant behaviour and the expectations placed upon them to make progress in their learning and parenting. The final section considers the correlation between the positioning of the teachers and the children. It explores how the teachers felt that the expectations placed upon them to comply had a ‘knock-on’ effect on the expectations they then had of the children. This then leads to a discussion on how teachers describe occasions where they have demonstrated resistance when expected to comply.

### **8.2 Aspects of compliance for teachers**

Teachers’ perspectives on complying with Department for Education policies and how they felt this shaped their practice is considered in this section. I focus on expectations related to the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013), attainment and pupil progress, parents and Ofsted.

#### **8.2.1 Attainment and curriculum**

In the previous two chapters, I reflected on the challenges the teachers in this study said they faced. They identified that workload was a concern and that for some of them it was difficult to fit in all they needed to do in the time available. Some of the tasks they were required to complete are linked to the policy directives associated with measuring children’s progress and accountability. Teachers are required to demonstrate compliance with the targets for pupil

progress and also the professional targets identified in the Teachers Standards (DfE, 2012). To ensure these targets are met, their practice and results are scrutinised and judged; meeting these targets therefore requires compliance.

The pressures on teachers working with children identified as having SEBD may be greater than for teachers working with children demonstrating developmental and skills levels regarded as typical (Jones, West and Stevens, 2006; Poulou, 2005). The way in which the teachers in this study had enhanced the curriculum to address the perceived gaps in social and emotional skills, discussed in Section 7.2, demonstrated how the extra workload played out in teachers' practice. Yasmin, Izzy and Rose described how they provided additional support because they felt the children needed it; without this the children would not successfully access the curriculum. This, they felt, when combined with the expectations upon them to ensure children met the academic targets set by the DfE, had an impact on their teaching.

In terms of teaching, Val explained that the pressure on her to ensure children made academic progress prevented her from focusing on the subjects that she felt were important.

*You see, I have already been told that when Ofsted come I can't do P4C [Philosophy for Children] because you can't show progress in twenty minutes but I can show them what a fantastic group of children this is and even Simon – Simon who can't keep his bottom on his chair for more than five minutes – is super in P4C (A:V:2).*

Val explained that she felt that a subject such as P4C which is not included in the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) was beneficial for the children's social and emotional development. The skills she described that the children developed are not listed in the 'knowledge-based' targets defined by the DfE and so did not seem to be regarded as relevant. Such skills would be considered to fit most closely with those identified in a pastoral curriculum. The inspections of teaching and learning carried out by Ofsted focus on specific subject knowledge. Val seemed to suggest that there was insufficient time to deliver aspects like P4C because she was told, presumably by the head teacher, to



make the curriculum subjects the priority in the timetable. Val's concern that "*you can't measure*" (A:V:2) the skills children gained from something like P4C is evident. She had to teach subjects which are in the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) because they would be measured by testing the children and this forced her to comply with externally imposed expectations. However, Yasmin presented a different perspective of how P4C could enable the children to learn and demonstrate skills,

[they] were doing level six SATs kind of stuff so it's a higher-level work ... 'cos the conversation they were having ... it was a bit like P4C ... trying to use kind of P4C language to argue the toss on a higher-level thinking paper (D:Y:3).

Yasmin appeared to feel that the skills derived from P4C could be applicable to subject specific learning. For her, the two aspects of learning sit well together. For Val, the two aspects are alternatives because there was not enough time within the school day to do both. The different perspectives in the two schools had a direct impact on the way the teachers taught. Yasmin felt that a pastoral and social based programme such as P4C would be beneficial to learning and communication. She thought that the subject-based learning would be enhanced if the children could develop their skills in explaining their knowledge. Val, however, had been told that a lesson like P4C was a waste of valuable lesson time, and that subject-based learning must be given priority. The schools seemed to promote two different attitudes to how they understood learning, reflecting different curriculum discourses. Val's school seemed to ascribe to Smith's (2000) transmission model that requires the teacher to deliver knowledge; whereas, Yasmin's school identified a more holistic and pastoral learning process which reflects the views of Noddings (2002) (as explored in Chapter 2.6).

Val made links between learning progress, which can be observed and measured, and the outcomes of an inspection of teaching. She described "*certain schools that have just been put into a 3*" [Ofsted category that calls for schools to improve] and that in order to demonstrate that they have improved

*“they’ve got to show progress in twenty minutes” (A:V:2).* For Val, being able to demonstrate such improvement presented challenges; she felt that such academic progress was not a linear process and so the judgements made on the children’s learning may be misleading.

*What the powers that be say, is that you’ve got to keep pushing and that they’ve [children] got to move forward, and we don’t work like that and I’ve got children who need ten or fifteen minutes just to process what they’re thinking (A:V:2).*

She explained that the children had to be taught differently so that they could demonstrate that they had made progress and that this entailed needing to know how to present their knowledge in a way that could be measured. Val, like Goodson (2014), had a negative view of regarding children as indicators of measurable progress. This, Val argued, was impacting on how she taught the children. She said that testing required more than just teaching information; it entailed teaching children how to complete test papers.

*Actually, in order to get results I know a lot of schools that just spoon feed and that’s not education either, you know, just training them; and I’m doing it now, you know, training them, ‘this is how you answer a SATs question’ and you have to do it because there are skills involved and I can settle for that whilst there are skills that they need to learn, but it won’t help them in real life (A:V:2).*

This, she felt, was not what education should be about. Rather than developing skills for *“real life”* (A:V:2), the children were being taught to answer SATs (national curriculum tests) questions, which she felt would not be beneficial for them as individuals.

### **8.2.2 Proving compliance through progress**

Having explored curriculum and attainment in the previous section, this section explores teachers’ perspectives on the impact of inspection and the judgements of teaching and learning in schools.

Izzy, described the concerns she and her colleagues had felt about a forthcoming Ofsted inspection and the SATs the children were required to complete. The data produced from the SATs results are used by Ofsted to gauge the amount of progress the children have made (Ofsted, 2013). She explained that the current cohort of Year 6 children who would complete the forthcoming SATs would not be able to show the levels of achievement that Ofsted expect. This, she felt, would have implications on the judgement Ofsted made about the teaching and learning in the school. She explained that additional support had been put in place to help the children complete the tests.

*Ofsted! We're due again in September, we've got a full cohort and we're not under any illusion, we're going to struggle, but there's a lot going on ... there have been huge, huge amounts of progress ... the support's been in the right place, but this year, we know the cohort that we've got ... it happens [shrugs shoulders, implies that the children may not do well in the assessments]. We can't shy away from it and this year six cohort and the year six teachers are working their flaming socks off. We've got two year six teachers and we've got three tutors, one to one tutors, so you can imagine, we've got five teachers just for year six. They are working their socks off to get these children up [the attainment levels]; each child has one to one tutoring in school, at the moment the year sixes are having breakfast at half past eight in the morning ... but what more can you do? (B:I:1).*

When this comment was considered in relation to her descriptions of the children she worked with – those with social and emotional difficulties and who live in vulnerable circumstances – it became apparent that additional support was very important to her. Nicole, who worked in the same school, summed up the challenges that the teachers and children faced when it came to demonstrating success and achievement,

*we still have the same pressure of the percentages and everything else that everybody else has ... there's no reason why those children can't meet those standards that the government sets for everybody else, I don't give their situation as an excuse for not making that because they can, but they just need a bit more support and a bit more thinking outside of the box, little bits of interventions here, there and everywhere to help them get there (B:N:1).*

Yasmin's narratives about David, as discussed in Chapter 6, described his learning needs and how support such as 'Circle of Friends' was put in place to help him access the environment and the learning. When she reflected on how his progress could be measured and presented to Ofsted, she hesitated and seemed to doubt how to do this,

*If Ofsted came in and said prove it and I'd have to ... well ... I don't know, yeah, we'd tell them but I think proving it for David's a bit like, well, we've put all this stuff in place and he's had fewer blow ups, Mum seems more relaxed, he's engaging with all the outside agencies he's working with and his learning's coming on so that's proof but hard data-wise there isn't any, well, there is on his SATs I suppose but its tiny steps and it takes a long time (D:Y:3).*

The difficulty for Yasmin, was that the social and emotional skills that David and his peers were developing were important to enable them to access the statutory curriculum, but that progress was often slow and that "*the interventions we do, it's going to be hard to measure, isn't it*" (D:Y:1). She also felt that the breadth of the data collected about children's progress and attainment was insufficient. She argued that the data requested by Ofsted were too narrow and did not consider the broader, pastoral and holistic achievements children made. She also felt that the data did not demonstrate the extent of the support put in place, "*it's bigger than what's on those trackers, much bigger*" (D:Y:1).

The experiences the teachers shared in our conversations suggested that the daily teaching tasks are structured by the need to demonstrate progress and to support children to successfully demonstrate their knowledge through a testing process. Their experiences included teaching children the skills required to regurgitate what they had learnt in their lessons. The 'banking' model described by Freire (1970), in which children are filled with information that is deemed to be relevant for later life, seems to correlate with the teaching experiences identified here. The teachers' narratives provide insight into how the teachers were complying with a system of assessment and measurement. They described the changes they made in their teaching to increase the children's progress; these, they hoped, would then impact on the judgements made about

the school. For Val, this meant changing the content of lessons; for Izzy and Nicole, it meant increasing the level of support offered; and for Yasmin, it meant providing additional support and developing a way of demonstrating the small steps of progress made.

It is interesting to consider what the teachers said about why they felt they had to comply with such expectations of measurement and attainment. There was acknowledgement by Nicole and Amy that the achievement of children linked directly to their own achievement as teachers. Nicole talked about “*all the government changes, pay progression, expectations, levels, everything else*” (B:N:1) and said that this could have an impact on where a teacher may choose to work. She felt that teachers may be more likely to choose to work in a school where incidents of challenging behaviour and low achievement would be minimised. She talked loyally about the school where she worked and did not suggest that this was a possible consideration for her. For some teachers, however, she suggested it might be, “*you could go, ‘oh my gosh, I’ll never get that [here], oh, I’m off to leafy green ‘cos they’ll get their scores there*” (B:N:1). Amy explained that if children were not able to demonstrate measurable progress then “*that’s my performance management and I could not get my pay*” (A:A:1). However, the other teachers made no specific comments about links between their own teaching performance and the children’s progress. Instead, Rose and Yasmin and Izzy described in detail how they assessed the needs and measured the progress of the children in their schools; their focus was on collecting the data and finding a way to present it. They made no links to their own performance other than to refer to their personal feelings of pleasure, happiness or despair in response to the children’s achievements.

### **8.3 Meeting the expectations of parents**

In the previous two sections I explored the comments teachers made about meeting the requirements of pupil progress and inspections. The pressures they discussed also seemed to have an impact on what they expected of

parents. In this section I reflect on how the pressures placed on teachers seemed to play out in the relationships they had with the children's parents.

The narratives shared by the teachers about parents suggested that they were expected to comply with the expectations of parents in terms of progress and achievement. The DfE highlighted that *"the assessment and test data will enable parents to compare attainment and progress in different schools"* (2014b, p4). Extensive tables are provided on the government's website to enable parents to judge their child's progress alongside the age-related expectations for achievement. The teachers in this study explained that such resources could lead to increased knowledge and understanding for some parents, but inaccurate expectations for others. Val described a meeting with a parent who behaved aggressively towards her because he felt she was failing to get his child to the levels of achievement he wanted. She felt that he had unrealistic expectations of his child's progress:

*I think also the other pressure from parents here is that they want achievement so you get the parent who sits opposite [in parents' evenings] and says 'why aren't they getting a 5, why are they not going to get a 5?' and then they don't know either their child or they don't know the system well enough. There was one father once who said that the only reason they had sent their statemented child to [school] was so that they could get a five and he leaned across and he got hold of me here [points to her neck]. It was awful and I said, 'let go of me now, let go of me or I will scream and if I scream you will have trouble' and he backed off but he was so frustrated, he wanted his child who was working at a level three to get a level five and he wasn't going to do it, not even with a miracle. (A:V:2).*

Amy confirmed that there were increased expectations by parents on teachers *"you get the parents that think you should be doing all of those things"* (A:A:1). The parents, she felt, look for reasons why their child is not making progress and either expect more from her teaching, or blame other children in the class. This is particularly relevant when considering the impact that disruptive behaviour can have on teaching and learning. Some teachers commented on the impact that disruptions by some children could have on the progress of their peers in the classroom. Amy identified that parents who felt their children were

not making progress due to such disruptions would blame the children identified as having SEBD.

*I've got to show that you are two sub-levels up by February when we've got parents' evening and at the moment I can't see that happening ... and there is blame because the children would go back [home] and say and they quickly blame individuals in the class for disrupting their child's learning ... they do want to know, you know, where should they be, well, they're not quite there yet but they will be if they do x, y and z, they will do and they want to know what YOU [emphasises] are going to do about it (A:A:1).*

Rose explained additional benefits of children leaving their mainstream classrooms to go to additional support groups, such as nurture groups. She pointed out that, in a child's absence, the disruptions were reduced and that the teacher and children remaining in the classroom were then able to focus on teaching and learning. By considering Amy's comments above in light of what Rose described, it may be reasonable to assume that parents may also find that the removal of some children from the classroom to be beneficial. Clough (2005) identified the implications such practices can have on children as having SEBD. He argued that children who were already regarded by some as being 'difficult' may be experiencing greater levels of exclusion because the education system does not promote or find it easy to measure their achievement.

The conversations suggested that teachers' experiences of complying with the expectations of parents, the Department for Education and Ofsted have implications for their practice. However, teachers also spoke about the way in which children do or do not comply with their teaching and how such experiences can influence the approaches and strategies they employ. These perspectives are considered in the next section.

#### **8.4 Compliance by children**

This section explores different kinds of stories that teachers told in relation to children's compliant behaviour. First, I reflect on what teachers said about the control they exerted over the children to ensure that they did as they were

asked and how this made them feel. Second, I consider the dilemma faced in one school when the children explicitly demonstrated their refusal to comply.

In line with the guidance on behaviour and discipline in schools (DfE, 2016a) schools are expected to use systems of rewards and sanctions (Payne, 2015). All the schools that took part in this study implemented behaviour management systems which were influenced by the reward/sanction behaviourist principles developed by Skinner (1953). As I looked around the learning environments in the schools for this study, I noticed pictorial and verbal reminders on the walls. These were intended to encourage positive behaviour and I heard teachers and teaching assistants referring to them when working with children. Some of the posters on the walls referred to social and emotional skills. These identified skills such as team working, resilience and respect for others. Other posters were used as warning systems. For example, in the traffic light system, each child's name would be put on the green light if they were complying with the expected classroom behaviour. However, if a child was given a warning for behaving inappropriately, then their name was moved to amber, and a further warning would result in it being moved to red. The red light usually indicated that a sanction would be issued, such as missed break time, loss of privilege or being sent to talk to a member of the senior management team.

Examples of the control exhibited by teachers to ensure that the children respond in ways that are considered acceptable were demonstrated in one school most of all – School A, where Amy and Val worked. Amy and Val's comments on how they regarded children considered to have SEBD, which seemed to align most closely with Macleod's 'bad' perspective, have already been discussed. In addition to describing how difficult the children could be for them to cope with, however, they also reflected on how this made them feel.

Amy talked about the way she worked with Paul, the child she said she found most challenging her class. She made it clear that his behaviour was unacceptable to her and I listened to her say to him “*I’m not having it, I’m telling you that you need to do this*” and referred to a “*three strikes and you’re out*” (A:A:1) approach. She talked about a forthcoming residential school trip which



made her feel apprehensive because she anticipated that he would demonstrate challenging behaviour. She said that she would “*just have to lay down the law on that first night and see what happens*” (A:A:1). Val demonstrated similar examples with Simon. Her “*this is what we’re doing, do it, do it now, I’ve asked you to do it now, do it now or I turn the card*” (A:V:2) comment demonstrated that after her attempts to coerce Simon to follow her instructions had failed; she resorted to insistence and suggested a sanction if he did not comply. Izzy described the need to ensure compliance from children who she felt were demonstrating controlling behaviours.

*it’s about control I think ‘cos a lot of the children here ... we find that the male pupils like to control and dominate situations and that makes things happen at home and they try and bring it into school too and it’s a case of ‘we need to take that control back’ (B:I:1).*

She explained that such children were considered to be “*high profile*” (B:I:1) and that the school behaviour policy, which involved increasing levels of warning and sanctions, was not always effective. Izzy had described how children were assessed in school in terms of their behaviour and vulnerabilities as learners. She indicated that children were considered to have different levels of needs and that some children were considered low profile whereby the usual classroom strategies and teaching approaches were adequate for supporting them. However, some pupils were considered to need higher levels of support which would include nurture group provision, exclusion from mainstream classrooms, and specific one-to-one support as necessary. One example Izzy gave of high level support included an after-school detention and she explained why,

*we have before kept children after school so we have an agreement with parents, any work incompleting or disruption to whole school learning, the timer is started and the time they waste is what they stay behind after school. I have had a couple of pupils here before where I have stayed until five-thirty and kept them here with me with the agreement of the parent – it’s beneficial (B:I:1).*

Another example Izzy shared about control was particularly interesting because of the way she positioned herself and the child, “*he spat in my face ... I went*

*and cleaned up and I just thought ... a lot of this is about control, so I went back in again after I'd cleaned myself up ... I think he kind of respected that, for me returning"* (B:I:1). It is impossible to say what the child thought about the experience, but Izzy seemed to suggest that she would gain greater respect for expecting the child to relinquish control and comply. Claire felt that by demonstrating control to the children she was using a "*tough love*" (A:C:1) approach and perhaps Izzy also felt that returning to the child after being spat on showed she was using a similar approach. It is only possible to surmise what Izzy meant, but her perspective is interesting in terms of control and compliance nonetheless.

Nicole's approach to teaching her class was different. She clearly identified that some children could be at risk of not complying with the behaviour expectations in her class, but that trying to exert control was not appropriate for her. In the extract from our conversation below, she talked about the successes the children had demonstrated in their academic attainment as if to prove that the skills she enabled the children to develop were having a positive impact on their learning and behaviour:

*It's a dialogue every day, [Teaching Assistant] and I will say he or she could easily go off the rails or she could, she could be off in a different direction and you have to sit on them, you don't have to try and make them, you know, say 'yes miss, no miss', 'sit there', 'what do you want me to do miss?' but there are certain skills that you have to embed ... some of them are already on goals [age related attainment], the top two groups have nearly achieved them, the second group are almost there* (B:N:1).

Rather than referring to attempts to control children's behaviour, Yasmin talked about responding to their needs. For example, instead of trying to control one particular child by insisting that he returned to his classroom, she talked about the child's dignity and seemed to suggest that a compromising approach was more appropriate. While we talked together about the photographs she had taken for this study, she looked out of the window and saw a child standing outside. His peers were in the classroom taking part in the lesson but he was leaning against the exterior classroom wall. She pointed him out to me and

explained that he was being taught by a different teacher than normal and so this may have unsettled him. She also guessed that he had probably had a difficult break time. We watched him from inside and he was not able to see us. Yasmin said, “*he’s cross*”. As the child kicked, pushed and jolted his body against the wall, he turned and his face seemed to depict anger. As an adult walked slowly towards the end of the wall, she slowed down and remained a few metres away from him. Yasmin explained that this was the Teaching Assistant from the child’s class and that the most likely approach would be to give him space and time and let him calm down. I suggested that an alternative approach could be to coerce or force him back into the classroom, and Yasmin replied,

*No, keep his dignity, he needs it ... they know when he blows you see, [he] is a little kettle and when he does go ... I used to talk to him a lot and I stopped ‘cos I drive him mad ‘cos I whittle on and he’s rather you just sit with him, that’s his best ... but you learn with [him] ‘cos he tells you [watches him kicking the wall] that’s it, go on, get it all out [she whispers this as if speaking to him] ... ooh, he’s gone in, in his own time and with dignity and no one’s any the wiser because he hid around a wall ... sorted! Ha! (D:Y:3).*

Yasmin also gave another example for what she felt would be the most successful outcome for supporting children who are experiencing social and emotional difficulties. She described how she listens to children so that she can then respond to them in a way that is right for them. She explained how she believed she was more likely to have a positive impact on a child if she could understand how children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties felt. She explained that “*it’s nice to learn with kids as well ‘cos they tell you how they learn don’t they – we’re not right, but they know what they want*” (D:Y:3).

Yasmin’s teaching and support, she said, was guided by the children who were more likely to know how they felt than she did. By listening and responding to them, she was demonstrating a child-centred approach. This approach, according to De Lissovoy (2013), is likely to have the most positive impact on a child’s sense of worth, which in turn will impact on their identity. A greater sense of worth and positive identity may then be more effective for enhancing pupil performance. Yasmin’s story also suggests that her approach may result

in greater levels of content for the teacher. She felt that insisting on compliant behaviour would not lead to a positive outcome for either child or teacher.

## 8.5 Compliance in parenting

In section 8.4 I provided examples of how teachers talked about compliance in the classroom. Claire and Amy talked of trying to exert their control in order to ensure children behaved as they wanted, whereas Yasmin and Nicole suggested that this control was not needed.

Some teachers also shared examples of another, more subtle form of control, that of control over parents. Relationships with parents were mentioned many times by participants. As explored in Section 7.2.3, they described the additional support sessions they put in place to develop parenting and academic skills. It could be suggested that these sessions could also be considered as a way of gaining compliance from parents. By developing their knowledge and skills in parenting in certain ways, the parents would be more likely to behave in the ways that the teachers consider appropriate. For example, research into adult literacy and numeracy skills and family literacy programmes (Swain, Cara, Vorhaus and Litster, 2015) identified that “family literacy programmes have a positive effect on Key Stage 1 (5-7 years old) children’s reading scores” and that “strong evidence emerged of increased parental understanding of school literacy processes and pedagogies over the course of the intervention” (p2). The parents who engaged in the support sessions provided in schools B, C and D were thought of in positive terms by teachers such as Yasmin and Rose. They felt that greater levels of engagement with parents was beneficial to the children’s welfare and progress. Rose said, *“it is working, and they do come over and chat to you and sort of, you know, another way really to just feel they’re part of it”* (C:R:2). Yasmin, who described her work with parents as being an important part of her role, explained that in order to increase social and emotional skills, the children need to access support at home and school. If the parents do not share the same values and expectations that school has of

the children, then this could be detrimental to the school ethos and values and may render the school's practice as less effective.

*I think there's a lot of kids who are good in their behaviours and their choices and they get it but then some just haven't got there yet because they just don't get it at home, so you follow what you see, don't you, and parents are the constant, and we try to teach it to them but if the parents negate it when they go home and don't follow it ... (C:R:2).*

Yasmin suggests there is an incentive for teachers to encourage the parents to contribute to their children's social, emotional and academic progress in ways aligned with those promoted at school, especially if they feel that parenting skills and knowledge is insufficient (Swain, Cara, Vorhaus and Litster, 2015). Explaining the school's aims and rules to them and providing parenting sessions are ways of doing this. However, they could also be seen as a subtle way of encouraging parents to comply with a shared set of expectations.

## **8.6 Rebelling against expectations**

While much of the discussion focused on compliance, occasional stories suggested moments of rebellion. During one of the meetings with Val, the head teacher came into the classroom with a pile of questionnaires in her hand. She apologised for interrupting and then told Val that there was a problem. She explained that an additional assembly for the year six children was necessary in order to explain to the children that their responses in the 'pupil questionnaire' were not "*good enough*" and that they must complete them again. After the head teacher left the classroom, Val looked at me, shook her head and explained the situation.

*They did a student questionnaire last week and they all had to answer the same questions and it was anonymous and it was things like 'Are you happy? Do you feel you learn?' all this, and the Y6s have all rebelled. So one class just put disagree to everything irrespective of what it said, one child wrote at the bottom something incredibly rude about the head teacher, and unfortunately his handwriting is really distinctive so we know who it is. A child in here, who we really like, wrote that he doesn't feel that he is not heard and that he is unhappy and that he doesn't feel safe,*

*but he hasn't said any of those things to us and again distinctive handwriting, so I know who that is, but [the head teacher] wants to handle it by telling them that this isn't good enough and to do it all again (A:V:2).*

Val made parallels between children's responses and how she perceived her own democratic rights. She described her experiences of voting and explained that if a person chose to spoil their ballot paper or vote then that was up to them. She felt that the year six children had chosen to rebel and that this hinted at a problem that she and her colleagues needed to address.

*I want [the head teacher] to say 'why is this year group rebelling? What is happening? Where has it gone wrong? How can we help them?' ... if they don't trust us, if they're not co-operating then how do we build that? and I think that if we don't help them then how are they going to be any different? How can they choose differently, and if we don't give them a platform, if we tell them, which we do, that the student voice is important and if they then scream, we can't then say, 'stop screaming' and even if it's a plot, even if a few individuals have set it all up then there's something deeper we should be discussing and not telling them off (A:V:2).*

Questionnaires such as the ones completed by these year six children are commonplace in many schools. They can be used as part of the data used to measure school performance and practice, for example by Ofsted to gauge an impression of the feelings of the children about their school. The responses the head teacher received in this case, if used in the school's data, could have raised concerns for the parents, the school governing body and Ofsted. The desire for a positive set of responses from the children is understandable in this context, but Val felt that there was a need to investigate the underlying reasons for why the children had responded in the way they did. To force compliance by insisting that the children complete the questionnaire again was a concern for Val. This incident also highlights that there could be a 'domino effect' of compliance. The pressure exerted on the head teacher impacts on the pressure she exerts on her staff and the children and a system where 'they do it to me, so I do it to you' then develops (Osborn, McNess and Broadfoot, 2000). This 'domino effect' was commented upon several times in different ways by the teachers in this study.

## 8.7 Summary

This chapter explores a variety of perspectives on how compliance was experienced and asserted/achieved, and indeed how people felt and what they did when they faced non-compliance. The implementation of behaviour systems was observed in each of the schools. However, the additional support programmes provided for those children who were considered to have SEBD varied. The teachers gave examples of how they felt about the control they exerted over the children in order to gain compliance, and suggested that this was also used with the children's parents.

The teachers' narratives about how they felt pressurised to ensure children met the age-related targets associated with the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) suggested they faced dilemmas and concerns. The expectations on them to measure the children's progress and then provide data as proof of their effective teaching caused feelings of stress. These concerns intensified when trying to demonstrate progress for children who they considered to have SEBD. They felt that not only did the children lack the skills to comply with expectations for behaviour, but that their academic progress was also below age-related performance descriptors.

As explored above, Osborn, McNess and Broadfoot (2000) argued that the impact of performance-related teaching and learning affects both teachers and children. The teachers in this study affirmed that the pressure to demonstrate pupil progress put pressure on them. They described how their own professional concerns about accountability could affect how they taught and interacted with the children, generating a stressful learning environment where everyone was under pressure. This, in conjunction with some teachers' doubts about how appropriate they felt the content and targets in the *National Curriculum* (DfE, 2013) were, suggested that some teachers were now questioning their roles and professional identity. Val recognised that she felt

complicit in generating such an environment and described how unhappy she felt about it and how expectations on teachers seemed to be increasing:

*So, there's anxiety, anxiety to achieve and I think it rubs off and I think we're all doing the same. The powers that be say that you've got to do this and you've got to have made two levels progress at least and now we're saying that 12 points [measurement of school's performance] isn't good enough and that fourteen points isn't good enough ... We're just going to keep getting pressured to do more with less and eventually people will crack (A:V:2).*

There is no doubt that some of the teachers felt that they needed to comply with the pressures placed upon them as a result of teaching in a pressurised system where pupil progress and attainment was the priority. The comments by Val, Nicole and Amy suggest that they either disagreed with, or did not always comply fully with the expectations placed upon them and this acknowledges the possibility that some teachers may demonstrate subversion or resistance in their roles (Ball and Olmedo, 2013),

*I suspect I'll probably get it if it was known that that was what I was doing" (Val, A:V:)*

*We are not teachers who look at these children like numbers which you can quite easily be drawn down that line because there are those pressures ... but you have to think outside of the box (Nicole)*

*The constraints that are placed upon us are getting worse and worse and worse and the paper trail, the evidence, the impact of everything. Can't we just let the children be children? (Amy).*



## **Chapter 9: Towards a Rights Based Approach to Disability**

### **9.1 Introduction**

In the previous three chapters I explored what my participants told me about what it was like to be a teacher, and support children identified as having SEBD, in mainstream primary schools. The narratives they shared identified the successes and challenges they felt they have had when working in a learning environment which was shaped by performance and attainment-led policies and practices. Their narratives suggest that this experience takes place against the background of an education system which is focused on fast-paced and progressive learning expectations. It appears from their stories that the tensions and contradictions that have been associated more broadly with teaching in the current context intensify when teaching children categorised as SEBD. These tensions, their stories suggest, play out in intensely felt moments. The stories and conversations with teachers demonstrated their emotional responses to their work and their relationships with the children they taught. The way the teachers talked about the joys, frustrations, anger and unhappiness about their roles indicate that there is an impact upon their professional identities and this places a strain on teachers' perspectives about what they do.

As leading proponents of Disability Studies, Oliver and Barnes (2012) identify the psycho-medical/individual and social models of disability that are evident in current practice in schools. They distinguish between the 'needs' and 'entitlements' of individuals and how these are practised in society, and in schools. They argued for three key entitlements for every individual: equality with others; equality of opportunity; and to be able to have their voice heard and express their preferences in respect of what happens 'to' them. Focusing on the belief that everyone is entitled leads, as discussed in Chapter 2.3, to a rights-based model of disability. As Oliver and Barnes noted, different models of disability encapsulate views, beliefs and approaches which can shape and

develop the way individuals behave. This is demonstrated in this study when considering the narratives shared by the teachers. The discourses they construct do appear to have an impact on the way they relate to the children they teach.

In this chapter, I discuss how teachers' views and practices can be interpreted through the various models of disability, and how this can lead to complexities and tensions which impinge directly on practice and make communication about key issues difficult. I consider the perspectives shared by the teachers in this study and reflect on the way they talked about the children they teach. The relationships they form with those children identified as having SEBD, can be seen as reflections of the tensions arising through different understandings of disability. In the absence of a rights-based model I suggest that teacher stress and anxiety will increase, and disabled children (including those with SEBD) will continue to be excluded, marginalised and positioned in deficit terms, regardless of how well-intentioned efforts to include them, and support them, in mainstream schools are. I consider how the mainstream education system is ill equipped, both practically and theoretically, to accommodate and support disabled children – and more specifically, those children who exhibit disruptive and disturbing behaviours - and how this can be damaging for teachers as well as pupils. I consider how teachers' experiences of policy and curriculum put them into conflict with a model of disability which could help them better support the children they work with. I argue that enabling teachers to understand and reflect on contradictory constructs of inclusion, and how these differently frame children identified as having SEBD, can be an emancipatory first step in the process of moving towards a rights-based approach to disability.

## **9.2 Perceptions of behaviour and professional identity**

The stories shared by the teachers in this study demonstrate a breadth of strategies and approaches used to support children identified as having SEBD.

The way in which the 'mad/bad/sad' and 'immature' perspectives of children's behaviour played out within the stories provides an insight into how practice is shaped. As discussed at the outset of this thesis, I acknowledged the points made by Norwich (1999) and Hodge (2005), that labelling can be misleading, misinterpreted or unhelpful in understanding children. However, it is clear that the way in which the teachers talk about children and the impact this has upon their practice certainly demonstrates that they regard children in different ways. The children were described by some teachers as being either 'naughty', 'unable to help it', or as 'poor things'. I suggest that there is a link between how teachers perceive children and how they support them. These perspectives have significance for the teachers' beliefs about what, and how, they feel they need to teach. It is also possible that the teachers' beliefs about their role and their opinions about the relationships they have with the children could also contribute to the creation, and development of the perspectives they have. Yasmin, Izzy and Rose, who all referred to medical diagnoses or social deprivation to explain why the children were considered to have SEBD, seemed more content in their work. Val and Claire made it clear that they were not happy and described the children as being naughty. Even Paul, who Amy acknowledged as having a medical diagnosis, was described as being wilful and responsible for the challenging behaviours he exhibited at times.

The medical and social models of disability have implications for teaching. As described in Chapter 2.3, the divisive nature of a 'needs-based' provision leads to perceptions that some children are different. These children do not seem to fit within the normalised practices within a school and so they may be labelled, medicalised and excluded. Such experiences seem to provoke emotional responses for teachers about how they teach (Nias, 1989).

The narratives shared with me suggested there are clear links between teachers' emotional and professional well-being and the way they talk about and act towards the children identified as having SEBD. Building on research by Day and Kington (2008) and Osborn et al (2000), it is reasonable to conclude

that a teacher who attributes blame to children because their behaviour is difficult to manage (the 'bad') may not be content in their work. Claire demonstrated this most of all: she felt she could not teach the children who she perceived as being naughty and difficult. As a result, she did not feel satisfied in her work and felt that because some children did not learn effectively, she would be judged as ineffective by those to whom she is accountable. She told me she was unhappy, that her professional well-being was affected and that the result was stress-related illness. In addition to this, Claire only described the challenges, difficulties and deficits of working with children identified as having SEBD. She did not talk about her aspirations for them and there was no mention of success or attainment, only examples of why they did not achieve. Her relationships with the children were predominantly shaped by the need to control and discipline and as a result the responses she received from them were not positive (Kelchtermans, 2009).

Yasmin, on the other hand, implied that the children she was working with were not choosing to behave in challenging ways 'just to make her teaching difficult'. She felt that these children were behaving differently to their peers in the classroom because they had social or emotional difficulties. These children may have been given medical diagnoses such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Asperger's Syndrome, which she accepted would have an impact on the way the children behaved. Alternatively, the children may have been regarded as vulnerable or who had experienced difficult circumstances in their social and home lives. This seemed to give her a reason and explanation for why her teaching, and the provision offered, needed to be responsive to the children. Yasmin talked with pride and purpose when she described her work and said that she loved the job and the children. She demonstrated positive levels of professional well-being and explained that she felt fulfilled. In light of this, Yasmin's and Claire's experiences reflected those of the teachers researched by Kelchtermans (2009) who concluded that professional identity is directly related to professional well-being. The positive relationships with the children that Yasmin experienced resulted in her receiving good feedback from the children; their needs were often met; they were happy and they demonstrated this to Yasmin. This meant that Yasmin felt effective in her work

and her self-image and self-esteem were positively affected as a result. Even at this most crude level of comparison, it is easy to see how different understandings of, and approaches to, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties affect teachers' experiences.

Thorius (2016) recognised teachers like Yasmin in her research. She identified that teachers who supported learners with special educational needs, such as those with SEBD, had a tendency to see themselves as specialists in what they did. She concluded that,

The special educators within the study both pathologised their students with dis/abilities, as well as constructed their professional identities around a central goal of fixing them (Thorius, 2016, p13).

Yasmin joked about being "*special*" when she described her role, and like Izzy, acknowledged that working with children who were considered to have social and emotional needs required a particular set of skills and beliefs. Thorius explained that "educators' characterisations of themselves as different from general educator colleagues [was] because of their commitment to 'the cause' of special education" (2016, p2) and that this gave teachers a purpose for what they did. Izzy, Yasmin and Nicole all referred to the way their roles needed to make a difference to the children's lives as well as their learning. They saw themselves as doing more than just teaching a subject specific curriculum. The descriptions of the children these teachers tended to use ('mad'/'sad') provided both a purpose and a reason for what they did: if the children had diagnoses or were vulnerable then the teachers were needed by them, and this gave their roles, and professional identity, credibility.

The teachers in my study seemed to suggest (and this is supported by Thorius) that a 'special education' enables them to move away from the one-size-fits-all curriculum. It means that they can personalise the support they give to each individual child and, as a result, feel as if their teaching is effective. This leads to positive emotional responses for the teachers and enhances professional well-being. However, the perception that teachers see themselves and the children as being 'special' does raise awkward questions when looked at

through a rights-based perspective. The dismantling of divisive ways of regarding, interacting with and legislating for disabled people is fundamental in a rights-based culture (Oliver and Barnes, 2012). Equality would be unachievable if certain groups of individuals are regarded as different to others. In a society where the rights-based approach is embedded there would be no 'special' because the 'normal' currently ascribed to the majority of individuals within society would apply to all: 'normal' would be normal.

The teachers in this study shared their positive and negative feelings about teaching SEBD in mainstream schools. However, there were a lot of negative comments about the teaching role, about the challenges they say they face and about the impact that they feel some children have on their role. Teachers may experience negative feelings as a result of some the interactions they have with children who exhibit disruptive and disturbing behaviours. Teachers like Val and Claire seemed to present themselves as victims; they made no references to 'entitlements' either for themselves or for the children. Whereas Yasmin and Nicole, demonstrated that they felt entitlement was an important element for the children they perceived as having SEBD. They presented themselves as advocates for the children.

Whilst I acknowledge that these perspectives of the teachers are based on my own interpretations of what I think they were telling me, it is possible to begin to develop an understanding that the teachers, despite having similar teaching roles, form different views and approaches to the way in which they perceive the behaviours of some children.

In this section I reflected on how the teachers seemed to shape their professional identities in response to their feelings about their work. I suggested links between the different perspectives the teachers have developed in response to the behaviours exhibited by some children in their classrooms and how this links to their professional well-being. In the next

section, I consider both the practical and theoretical perspectives in relation to a move towards a rights-based model in mainstream primary schools.

### **9.2.1 Moving towards a rights-based model?**

In this section I discuss how stories shared by the teachers in my study demonstrate links between perceptions of SEBD, professional well-being, and provision. I consider how these perceptions can be used to critique existing practice and evaluate the way in which a rights-based model could bring about new perceptions. But first, I consider the potential limitations and critiques pertinent to the theoretical concepts of the disability models within a school context.

As discussed in Chapter 2.3, the ideological basis for the psycho-medical/individual, social and affirmative models of disability have influenced education policy and guidance for teaching pupils identified as having SEN, disabilities and, more specifically, SEBD. The medicalised view of children has enabled medical and education professionals to diagnose, categorise, and, where considered appropriate, to medicate children, often with the intent of ‘normalising’ them, thereby enabling them to access their educational contexts (Oliver, 2013). The four categories of need listed in the *SEND Code of Practice* (DfE and DoH, 2015) perpetuate the categorisation and identification of difference between children in schools and this is evident in the conversations some of the teachers had with me. Izzy, Amy and Yasmin refer to specific diagnoses and seem to link these to behaviours in the classroom and the impact this has on the way in which they teach. The social model, which places expectations on society to provide the resources and approaches necessary for enabling individuals identified with deficits or impairments, was used to shape the practice in education settings through the *SEND Code of Practice* (DfE and DoH, 2015) by identifying inclusive practice. This has influenced the way in which the teachers in this study perceive their role in relation to working with

SEBD. Danielle, Izzy, Debbie, Yasmin and Amy refer explicitly to inclusion. They talk of the challenges they face when trying to include some children in their classrooms. Claire, Val and Bea talk about how difficult it is to ensure their teaching is inclusive when specific children who exhibit disruptive behaviours are in the class; this resonates with the research as being potentially exclusionary by Clough (2005) and Corbett and Norwich (2005).

For the teachers who participated in this study there seemed to be dilemmas for how to meet the needs of all the children in their class. Claire seemed to indicate that inclusion was not possible. Indeed, critique of the debates within disability studies as described in Chapter 2.3, demonstrated that concerns regarding the medical and social models of disability (Owens, 2015; Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000; Shakespeare, 1996) from a conceptual perspective were as problematic as the practices that sought to implement inclusive education. Later in this chapter I identify some possible strategies and operational approaches that teachers may consider which may bring about a move towards practice underpinned by a rights-based model of disability. This is considered by some (Oliver, 2013; Albert, 2004; Peters, Johnstone and Ferguson, 2005; Browne and Millar, 2016) to be an effective way of addressing the issues and inadequacies of the social and medical models in particular. However, in reality, a full and comprehensive move from one model, or models, to another is fraught and raises yet more issues. The lessons learnt by Oliver in his reflections (2013) on his suggestions made thirty years earlier for a move from the medical to the social model should be considered. Whilst the drive to change perceptions, concepts and policies of, and for, disabled people may have been well-intentioned and theoretically appreciated, the actuality of changing teacher and learner practises resulted in confusion, and over simplified ways of viewing the difficulties faced by those involved. The reality of being able to change to a rights-based model from ones which are ideologies embedded within practice (Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000) may be considered to be as problematic (Oliver, 2013). Not only is the attempt to create policy and practice from ideology ill-advised (Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000), the shift in perspectives for all teachers, policy makers, children, and individuals in society



in general, would be difficult to achieve. Values and beliefs would need to change on a deep level, and discourse would need to change at the surface level (McDonnell, 2003). This would be impossible for individual teachers working within the education system to achieve. They have little or no say over legislation and policy in schools (Goodson, 2014) and are held accountable in regard to meeting expectation and performative targets (Ball, 2003; Evans, 2011). Therefore, they have minimal opportunity or agency to change what they do and the teachers' comments relating to compliance in Chapter 8 confirm that in this study.

One of the biggest barriers to bringing about a change in ideology of disability surrounds the existing perspectives of disability. While ever the education system has categorisation and acceptance of perceptions of individuals with deficits at its heart, it may not be possible to move from individual and social models towards one which is rights-based. As demonstrated in the previous three chapters, the teachers do seem to ascribe to deficit discourses and they are familiar with SEND categories; they provide data of pupil need to the government for annual SEND census processes; and some seem to develop these categories to incorporate 'mad', 'bad' and 'sad' discourses (Wright, 2009). It is reasonable to assume that to create an education system in which every pupil is considered 'normal' and entitled to an education which will promote equality of perception and opportunity is likely to fail whilst policy perpetuates difference and inequality. However, Shakespeare (1996), Llewellyn and Hogan (2000) and Owens (2015) seemed to suggest that this is due to simplified perspectives of disability and simplified implementation of ideology into policy. As described in Chapter 2.3, there are nuances within the ideology of the models of disability, and nuances of individual perspectives – both of the self and of others. These nuances have not been adequately recognised in policy (Oliver, 2013) and have been over-simplified in guidance for teachers (Skidmore, 1996). As a result, teachers are faced with expectations on them which seem have been created through a confusing array of ideological influences; yet which still seem to over generalise and over simplify views about the disabled and their needs (Lave and Gardner, 1993). Such confusion may

arise from the failed attempts (Oliver and Barnes, 2012) to implement policy and practice brought about by attempts to mould different perspectives into a one-size-fits-all National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015). I describe confusion and complexity in my analysis of what the teachers talked about in relation to fulfilling their roles, being accountable and meeting the needs of the children exhibiting challenging behaviours in their classrooms. This may begin to explain why their responses and experiences are also complex. Their descriptions of joy, success, despair and failure may be linked to the range of ways in which they talk about the children they teach – they describe how they like and love them, and how they dislike and are frustrated by them. It is possible that the link between their feelings towards their roles and the children reflects on the way in which they respond to the confusing expectations placed upon them. I suggest that those teachers who regard learners as being entitled to having their needs met, are those who may recognise the nuances within the ways policy and perspectives are played out and as a result, they demonstrate greater nuances in their roles and practices. Teachers, like Izzy and Yasmin, described how they used resources provided as a result of medical diagnoses and categorisations to enable them to help children access the learning they were entitled to. They were able to demonstrate how the medical model approach gave them the ‘tools’ needed to implement a social model approach yet the ‘entitlement’ and rights-based attitude that underpinned their teaching discourse enabled them to use such ‘tools’ in a way that learning was less divisive and deficit based. I would not suggest that this was transformative; the performative and accountable elements to their role still shaped and dictated what they did, but their perspectives helped them to find their way through the confusing guidance and policy. This was demonstrated by the way in which they developed and implemented a range of approaches in their schools.

As I talked with each of the teachers in the four schools I began to identify different aspects in provision and I identified these as different characterisations of their roles and the schools they worked in. I recognised that Val’s school structured their provision through a curriculum-led approach. The children were

expected to learn through a transmission style of teaching (Smith, 2000). The transmission style is reliant on a delivery approach which 'gives' the children the knowledge and skills they are considered to require for future assessments or actions. The subject-specific curriculum was planned and delivered and the children were expected to demonstrate progressive attainment on a regular basis. The children recognised as having SEBD did not always make the required progress and were sometimes blamed for preventing and disrupting the progress of their peers. The three teachers in school A seemed to describe the children identified as having SEBD in a way that would correspond with the 'bad' perspective (Macleod, 2006) and the children were regarded as being a detriment to the teaching and learning in the school. These teachers were not happy in their work. They talked of the stresses and pressures that were put upon them and the children and they attributed this to management expectations (from the head teacher) and external inspections (from Ofsted and national tests) and this supports the view of Ball (2003) in his discussion on performativity. The teachers seemed to see the deficits they identified with the child (the psycho-medical/individual model) as the reason behind such behaviours. Their recognition that the children were 'unable' to learn a curriculum or access the transmission approach seemed to be accepted as typical for those children. Claire, in particular, talked about how the disruptive behaviours would prevent her from teaching but did not offer any alternative ways in which she could address this through the way she taught.

A second characterisation of possible links between school ethos and teachers' roles can be found in the two schools that Izzy, Nicole, Bea and Yasmin worked at. They described how they provided a broader range of learning experiences for the children. They talked confidently of meeting the children's social, emotional and academic needs. Each of them described how they supported families as well as the children and also referred to themselves as being part of a 'school family'; the collegiate feel was strong. Although each of the teachers recognised the challenges of teaching children identified as having SEBD, they did not seem to see the children as being 'bad'. Instead, they referred to the children's medical diagnoses or their vulnerability due to social circumstances.

They seemed to use terminology and descriptions which spanned both the 'mad' and 'sad' perspectives (Macleod, 2006). They seemed to indicate that children from deprived social circumstances were more likely to have medical diagnoses. They all talked of their love for the teaching role and that they felt a purpose for what they were doing - they wanted to improve the lives of the children and their families. The performance and attainment-led expectations placed upon them were no different to those for Claire, Val and Amy, but they seemed to see beyond these and focused on a child-centred and pastoral based curriculum. They felt that by developing a curriculum which addressed the social and emotional difficulties that the children experienced, the children would subsequently cope more successfully as learners. Each of these teachers described how they felt happy and positive about what they did.

The third characterisation is demonstrated in Rose's school. Rose described how her school had undergone changes in ethos and organisation over the previous five years. She described former teachers in the school who were unhappy and how their interactions with the children tended to be reactive to their challenging behaviours rather than supportive. This she felt had been addressed by changing their ethos in school to one which encapsulates inclusive practice,

*the whole school is inclusive practice so we don't tend to separate things off, when I started as SENCo, we decided that we didn't really like that role, so I am still SENCo but we do it as inclusion, so we look at gifted and talented, behavioural, social and emotional, looked after children, families involved with social services, so it's all brought in together really, it's more, more, not what we plan on a day to day basis but it's more sort of the whole ethos and approach of the whole school to make sure you know the children you're working with really well and look at other aspects that are influencing their life as well (C:R:1).*

She explained that she felt this had impacted on the way in which the teachers supported the children. She described how the challenging behaviour exhibited by some children had decreased as a result of these changes. She said that the teachers now seemed to be happier in their roles and that the air of discontent and conflict between teachers, and between teachers and children,

had diminished. Her reflections suggested to me that her school encapsulated the social model of disability. The school's practices and policies, and the teachers' attitudes, changed the way they supported the children. Rose described a move from an environment which seemed to be shaped by the 'bad' perspective to one which now regarded children as being 'entitled' to having their needs met.

Regardless of the characterisations I suggest the schools seem to represent, it was clear that every teacher felt that the challenges they faced in supporting the children were often overwhelming, particularly when they talked about their concerns for ensuring children made progress in their learning. An alternative way of approaching what might be seen as a failure to learn could be addressed by revisiting models of disability. Although I describe the limitations and challenges a conceptual change may bring about for policy in the education system earlier in this section, the ideology would still be a valuable lens by which to consider existing practice. A rights-based approach would prompt teachers to critically reflect on their perceptions of the children and the implications these have for their teaching approaches (Jones and Welch, 2010). Recognising that the children have the right to receive an education which is appropriate for their existing social, emotional and cognitive skills could lead to change at the 'chalk-face'. By providing teachers with the opportunities to critically reflect on their current practice, they would be encouraged to consider how their teaching could be developed to meet the needs of every child in their classroom. In the current context, the pressure on teachers to assess children and produce significant amounts of data to demonstrate progress takes up a lot of their time (Day, Elliot and Kington, 2005). By reducing some of these bureaucratic tasks and implementing time for critical reflection, teachers would be able to review and develop aspects of their practice, such as individualising the curriculum and the learning environment. A curriculum which reflects the needs of individual children, regardless of their levels of attainment (Swann et al., 2012) would then accommodate the children's strengths and developments. The teaching approaches would acknowledge the learners' interests and promote a desire to learn. The learning environment would be organised in a

way that reflects the abilities of the children in respect of how they access what is being taught (Bennathan and Boxall, 1996) so that it is one in which teaching and learning is relevant and engaging for each child, as described by Kamler and Comber (2005) in their account of 'turn-around pedagogies'. However, the conversations I had with Claire, Val and Amy, and the observations I made during my visits to their school, confirm that a rights-based model is far removed from, and may be incompatible with, the current culture within which they work. Their working days seemed to be consumed with planning, marking, producing data linked to learning objectives, preparing lessons, managing behaviour and ensuring that they could demonstrate pupil progress every twenty minutes for a future Ofsted inspection. They talked about being exhausted and so to suggest that they find opportunities at the present time to engage with critical reflection and evaluation of pedagogy and practice would probably have been met with derision and horror (Ballet and Kelchtermans, 2009).

In this section I have considered the conceptual subtleties and limitations that a move towards a rights-based approach to teaching may bring. I also reflected on the how teachers seemed to have developed a range of approaches to help them make sense of the muddled and complex expectations placed upon them in relation to inclusive, yet exclusive, medical and social approaches to education policy. I have suggested that the teachers' provision can be linked with the different perspectives associated with the social and psycho-medical/individual models of disability and that this can be seen through a range of characterisations of provision in the different schools. I argued that critical reflection, through a disability rights-based framework, may have a positive impact on practice, but that this is not possible due to the lack opportunity or freedom teachers have to make changes on surface or deep level structures (McDonnell, 2003) and because of the enormous pressures on their time and the need to be accountable. In the next section I consider how these pressures of teaching in a performative system presents, not only issues of time and

opportunity for the teachers, but also raises dilemmas and tensions in their roles.

### **9.3 Performativity and a rights-based model of disability**

This section explores how the pressures of performativity (as described by Ball, 2003) play out for teachers who support children identified as having SEBD, and the implications this has for their perspectives on their professional identity. As discussed in Section 3.5, teachers develop professional identities through the discourses which are pertinent to their roles. At the current time, teaching is shaped by assessing, measuring pupil progress and accountability. These are directly influenced by a neoliberal influenced education system. As explored in Sections 2.6 and 2.7, policy-led expectations, first demonstrated through the Education Reform Act (HM Gov, 1988), have had implications for the structures and practices within schools. These are causing some teachers to re-evaluate the purpose of their role, and how they perceive themselves as teachers.

The quality of teachers' professional well-being and sense of professional identity cannot be solely attributed to their relationships with the children. I have already commented on the way their relationships and teaching practice are affected by broader expectations brought about by policy and curriculum, but this merits further consideration. By applying the framework of a performative culture, as described by Ball (2003, 2012, 2013, 2015), to a teaching role which incorporates additional requirements for teaching children identified as having SEBD, it is possible to identify the pressures for those teachers involved in teaching children identified as having SEBD. The teachers in Ball's research (who were not associated with teaching SEBD) talked about the way their roles had changed. Ball (2003) asserted that the way teachers were held accountable and professionally measured, had a negative impact on their perspectives on teaching. In this study, Tom's sarcastic comments about policy, Yasmin's call for the DfE to "*get your blinkers off and look at the world*",

Val's despair, and Izzy's and Rose's concerns about demonstrating progress by those children identified as having SEBD confirmed that they were worried about the current education system. They believed that teaching through an assessment-led and competitive structure was not beneficial for either themselves or the children. The emotional impact of teaching (Hargreaves, 1998) influences professional identity which incorporates self-esteem and self-image (Kelchtermans, 2009).

Teachers experienced a range of emotions for several reasons. Mackenzie's research (2012) demonstrated that teachers working with disabled children experienced strong emotional responses. She did identify negative emotions, but that teachers also experienced stronger attachments with the children and talked about their love for the children and their job. Comments and stories by the teachers in this study demonstrated affection for the children who seemed to challenge them the most and these gave insight into the conflicting emotions and dilemmas they felt.

Regardless of the way in which the teachers described the children, they were also emotional about the way they taught them. The impact such emotions had on the way they saw their role and their emotional responses to their role were reminiscent of what Ball (2003) described as the 'terrors' associated with teaching. The teachers struggled to correlate their perceptions of purpose and role with proof of their own effectiveness through specific measurable criteria. Ball (2003) pointed out that what teachers may see as being relevant in terms of performance may not match the criteria imposed on them by those to whom they are held accountable; what they are judged on is not what they feel they should be doing as teachers of children identified as having SEBD. I argue that these 'terrors' relate to their professional identity and well-being too. The way they have to perform in their role and the way they see themselves as professionals are not necessarily the same. The emotion found in the narratives in this study suggests that the teachers were frustrated and exasperated with the expectations placed upon them. They were trying to teach within a system



which has multiple and different requirements. They needed to meet their contractual obligations and demonstrate that they were successful in achieving the teachers' professional standards (DfE, 2012). They needed to ensure that the children made academic progress, regardless of any social and emotional difficulties and had to teach a curriculum which they felt did not meet the needs of some of the children. Finally, and most importantly for the teachers, they were trying to meet the needs of the children who were difficult to teach, difficult to measure, and who they regarded as being in an education system which was, sometimes, inadequate for them. These are the children who do not 'fit' in the current system where performance is the priority. All of these pressures have an impact on how teachers view what they do and how they view their role in the education system, in schools, and in the classroom. Ball (2003) argued that,

school managers [wanting] to extract increases in performance as measured against external targets or competitive averages ... would be unlikely to 'invest' in work with children with special needs where the margins for improved performance are limited (p223).

Yet the teachers I met were trying hard to reduce the limitations placed upon the children because of an inappropriate system. They demonstrated responsibility and affection for the children. Most of the teachers wanted the children to succeed and as a result, their teaching included approaches and strategies which tried to incorporate academic, social and emotional learning opportunities into an already full and pressurised timetable. This creates a complex network of expectations which leads to an exhausting workload and professional turmoil. Teachers are professionally 'terrorised' by trying to meet their performance targets. They are also 'terrorised' because they are trying to understand what they have to do and what they should do, and this challenges how they see themselves.

All the teachers who participated in this study were aware that they would be measured and tested in terms of how effective they were. They knew that the data demonstrating attainment would only partially take into account the

extensive additional strategies they provided. Their attempts to go above and beyond the statutory curriculum provision may be beneficial for the children identified as having SEBD, but the lower scores these children achieve when tested brings the overall picture of progress in the school down. From the teachers' perspectives, they were working harder, and for longer, but their achievements were still not good enough. The children identified as having SEBD are categorised as 'mad', 'bad', 'sad' or 'immature' because it is the most effective way to explain or excuse low attainment levels. By using such labels, teachers can demonstrate that slower pupil progress may be attributable to their deficits rather than because of less than good or outstanding (Ofsted, 2013) teaching skills. The labels, in some cases, provide a reason for why they should not be held accountable for these children. Even though Yasmin, who demonstrated enormous efforts to provide additional support for the children identified as having SEBD, and who described the children she worked with affectionately, still referred to some of them as "*chimps*" because they did not know how to sit at a table and eat their lunch. Val described Simon as "*a little shit*" and Rose talked about the child who was "*just not mature enough*", yet their affection for the children in their classrooms were evident. This, I suggest, demonstrates confusion and complexity in their relationships with children because of the confusion and complexity in how they are expected to teach them. Oliver (2013) would regard these kinds of descriptions of the children as being 'anti-rights' but the pressures on teachers to demonstrate age-related attainment whilst also trying to implement and maintain an inclusive teaching environment has led to situations in which identification of deficits within some children provides reasons or excuses for why attainment is not achievable. It may be reasonable to suggest that such contradictory perspectives of children's behaviours could be addressed if policy and curriculum is shaped through a rights-based approach. By using this as a framework for teacher training, professional development and inclusion support in schools, teachers may be encouraged to reflect on the contradictory and confusing perspectives that they use as a result of the pressures they face within the neoliberal influenced education system (Ball and Olmedo, 2013). Oliver and Barnes (2012) also considered the implications neoliberalism has had on the implementation of models of disability in schools. They recognised the conflict that neoliberalism

has brought to teachers who work with disabled children. Children who are “liabilities” (Hanko, 2005, p142) because their performance does not meet expectations will not be successful in a neoliberal society and as a result they will continue to be ‘dis-abled’. The polarisation of individuals as described by Clarke (2016), together with the exclusionary and divisive nature of the medical and social models of disability suggest that disabled people have been marginalised. The stories shared by the teachers in this study demonstrate the ways in which this marginalisation plays out in the classroom. The teachers face terrors of professional identity because they have to be non-compliant and unethical (Ball and Olmedo, 2013) in order to meet the needs of the children.

Further research would need to be carried out to clarify and explain the links between teachers’ perspectives of ‘mad’, ‘bad’, ‘sad’ and ‘immature’ and the terrors they face in relation to performance and professional identity. However, a synthesis of the views of Macleod (2006), Ball (2003), Kelchtermans (2005) and Oliver and Barnes (2012) suggests that the terrors of identity may be likely.

The emotions that the teachers in this research discussed with me were related to their responses to, and relationships with, the children. They said they struggled with the challenges of balancing what they must do in terms of the Teachers’ Standards (2012) and how they taught the children identified as having SEBD. Their reflections on their practice revealed conflict between what they *had* to do and what they *should* do (Ball, 2015). Val cries and says, *“I’m supposed to have got him to a level two, well I haven’t and I won’t and I can’t, I can’t!”* She described a dilemma that went deeper than simple practice in teaching, she was questioning what was appropriate for the child and saw this as different to what she was expected to do by those to whom she is accountable. Experiences like this were also expressed by other teachers who talked to me. They shared the professional dilemmas within their role, and seemed to struggle with the battle between the social and emotional needs that were identified in the children they taught and the objective data they had to provide. Such dilemmas impacted on their self-image (Kelchtermans, 2009) and

led to conflict in professional identity. Ball described this as “the structural and individual schizophrenia of values and purposes” (2003, p223). I argue that such conflicts force the teachers to question not only what they are doing, but what kind of teachers they are becoming. By building on Ball’s recognition that that this has led to a conflict in how teachers see their moral and performative purposes, it is possible to conclude that the teachers in this study may be faced with two questions:

1. Should I continue to do what I believe is right for these children and provide a pastoral led curriculum? I know that this will prevent me from meeting my targets and I may be judged to be an ineffective teacher, but it is my duty to put the children’s needs first.
2. Shall I teach the children the skills they need to pass the tests they are going to have to do? I know that this may increase their chances of passing the tests and my own performance will be regarded more positively, though, I also know that this is not a good holistic learning experience for them and does not meet their specific social and emotional needs.

The narratives of the teachers in this study suggest that if these questions were put to them their responses would be complex. Their responses would also be dependent on the changing and fluctuating emotions they experience when working with the children identified as having SEBD and also on the changing situations in which they find themselves. Val seemed to feel that she had to consider teaching Simon in ways that reflect the priorities expressed in question 2, but said she was not happy about it. However, she also acknowledged that sometimes this was easier to do than at other times “*on other days you’re doing it because you’re better or you’re more in your head where you’re consciously thinking what difference can I make, what does this child need at this minute?*” At these times, she felt more able to teach in a way that corresponded with question one. Similarly, Nicole would probably choose the first option, but it is likely that she would appreciate that the reality of the second would lead to her having doubts and uncertainties, “*whether you have got three consecutive outstandings, all of these things are important but you have to have in your gut*

*'I am doing this because ... I am trying to help these children'*". It is reasonable to deduce that such professional challenges have resulted in them questioning what it is they must do and what kind of teachers they are. It is not surprising that they seem to face 'terrors' about what kinds of teachers they should be and what professional identities they have. These 'terrors' and professional dilemmas can be seen in the stories they shared with me. The teachers talked about the internal battles they experienced between what they 'must' do and what they 'should' do.

It is possible that a rights-based model of disability would support the teachers to address the dilemmas they face and find responses to the concerns posed above. The conflict between providing the learning to which the children are (should be?) entitled and meeting expectations of performance is impossible to resolve in the current culture. An education system which focuses on the rights of the child for a participative learning experience would address this. Teaching standards which identify the educational rights of children to learn would alleviate the pressures of unrealistic and inappropriate targets and expectations. However, inspection systems of practice and performance in schools would also need to focus on a rights-based approach; without collaboration between policy, expectation and accountability measures, the approach would be ineffective. The measures by which teachers and schools are judged to be effective and successful would need to consider the extent to which the individual rights of all children to learn are met. However, until a complete re-evaluation of the performative culture takes place, teachers and children will continue to be judged against each other. The complex views, beliefs and experiences of the teachers in this study suggest that the education system is divisive for all involved. Teachers and children are categorised as those who 'can' and those who 'can't'.

The oppression of disabled people will only end when the oppression of all is overcome and that will only happen with major structural, economic, political and cultural transformation as well as resistance (Oliver and Barnes, 2012, p176).

In the next section I consider how the pressures of performativity and the expectations on them to comply to the policies and systems resulted in examples of subversion and resistance and how these types of responses may not be necessary if a rights-based model was used.

#### **9.4 Compliance, resistance and the possibility of a new way**

The teachers (Amy, Claire and Val) who perceived that they had to comply with policy directives seemed to have had the lowest levels of professional well-being amongst the teachers who participated in the study. These teachers seem to shape their conversations in a way that indicated that they felt they had little or no ownership over what they did. They suggested that their actions were imposed upon them by those to whom they were held accountable (for example, the head teacher) and that their roles were being shaped externally. These teachers were the ones who seemed to perceive the behaviours of some children in their classes as being attributable to Macleod's category of 'bad'. As Osborn, McNess and Broadfoot (2000) demonstrated in their research on teachers' perceptions, those teachers with minimal control over their own practices are more likely to demonstrate greater levels of control over the children they teach. Some of the teachers in this study seemed to suggest that they no longer felt they had control over their roles; that they had little ownership of what they did; and had less control over their professional identities. This seemed to resonate with the feelings of autonomy (Ball, 2015). These teachers, like Val, Claire and Amy, defined the children as being wilful and capable of choosing to be 'naughty' and 'bad'. This provided a reason for implementing the little control they felt was left to them on the children. The teachers who talked about how they were able to change the internal school systems and structures (such as Yasmin and Rose) had a greater experience of ownership and control over what they did. They implemented alternative strategies, developed the curriculum and felt that they were instrumental in shaping the provision in their schools. By making these changes, they retained the feeling that they could control what they were doing and their roles were

shaped accordingly. The ways in which the teachers implemented control over the children are reflected in the different approaches to behaviour management as discussed in Section 2.4. I provided examples in Chapter 8 of how teachers and children were expected to comply and Osborn et al (2000) describes how teachers in their research also revealed the impact of compliance and how this affected their levels of motivation and autonomy. I would suggest that a rights-based model would restore the feelings of autonomy and control that teachers say they lack (Ball, 2003 and 2015). The existing models of disability are no longer appropriate for teachers of children working in a performative regime. The expectations upon teachers to medicalise and/or include all learners within their mainstream classrooms raises confusing and contradictory practices. Teachers are held accountable for demonstrating progress and meeting the relevant professional standards and so compliance is expected. However, the teachers in this study presented confused and complex stories about how they felt they could or should support the children identified with SEBD, and confusion is perpetuated by the contradictory models of disability. A move away from these models towards one which regards all children as having the right to learn in a way which is appropriate and relevant to them would limit these contradictions. Teachers would be able to focus on identifying appropriate support which was relevant and which would meet the rights of the child to learn in an environment which could ensure equality of opportunity to succeed. The decisions the teachers make, in consultation with the child (and parents) would be based on their professional experiences and knowledge.

The teachers' responses to pressures, framing and compliance (discussed in Chapters 6, 7 and 8) suggest that there is another type of professional identity that can be found within the classroom: teachers who are subversive. These would be the teachers who say and do what is expected of them when being held accountable, but who then divert from the performative regime and provide a personal, social and emotional curriculum which addresses the barriers faced by children, including those who are entitled to additional support in their classrooms. I argue, however, that subversion is not a long-term solution. It may lead to even greater levels of control and inspection and accountability

measures. Subversion, no matter how laudable and morally ethical (Ball and Olmedo, 2013) requires confidence. Calling for teachers to develop resistance and subversive practices (de Lissovoy, 2013) would add even further to the feelings of confusion and contradiction that teachers seem to feel. A solution would be to implement a wide ranging and multi-faceted review of teacher practice in respect of the current models of disability used in schools. As McDonnell (2003) argues, the likelihood of change may be maximised through rebuilding the surface (day-to-day practices) and deep (policy, attitudes, culture) levels which reflect disability rights rather than needs. Browne and Millar (2016) summarise their call for a move to a rights-based model of education by arguing that a shared vision is needed as the stimulus and focus for change,

We (the authors) believe that regardless of one's particular academic allegiances the common ground we all share happens to be those values that are most important and most defining: ... full equality ... greatest extent of participation ... eliminate segregation and isolation ... human dignity ... To accomplish this progress, it is necessary to engage new thoughts and alternative philosophy perspectives and to welcome ideas that do not sit easily with current beliefs and assumptions (Browne and Millar, 2016, p276).

Browne and Millar's shared vision if applied to the education system in particular, would need to include the views of both children and their teachers. Teachers would be given the opportunities they need to reflect on how policy and practice influences their perspectives, professional identities and their well-being. I suggest that the teachers who participated in this study provided insights into the dilemmas they faced when working with children with SEBD. The emotional toll (Mackenzie, 2012) of being a teacher in the current system which sometimes seems to promote the opposite of what Browne and Millar (2016) proposed (inequality of opportunity, segregation, lack of participation and reduction of dignity) is a concern. It is reasonable to suggest that by meeting the rights of children, the well-being, professional identity and sense of purpose, and role would be improved (Mackenzie and Macleod, 2012).

## **9.5 Summary**



In this discussion, I have reflected on the insights provided by the teachers' narratives into their perspectives of what it is like to teach children identified as having SEBD in their mainstream classrooms. It has been possible to develop a broader understanding of what their jobs are like and how the schools in which they work have shaped what they do. By considering how they position the children in terms of their social and emotional needs, an understanding of why they resort to using specific ways of talking about them has been developed. They have shown that the current education system within which they work has an impact on several aspects of their professional identity. Some of the teachers are overwhelmed by the pressures to demonstrate that they are able to meet the expectations set out in the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012). They face dilemmas about meeting the children's needs and complying with the statutory guidelines. They question how appropriate the 'one-size-fits-all' subject-specific curriculum is for children with social and emotional difficulties and as a result often provide additional pastoral support, even though this may place greater pressure on their workload, which is already excessive. These teachers describe their concerns about how the target-led and testing-based culture in schools goes against the kind of education they feel is needed for children identified as having SEBD. Therefore, they sometimes develop resistant, subversive or non-compliant ways of being. I have shown that teachers' professional identity and well-being is directly affected by the performative culture, and that it has an impact on their professional and emotional well-being; the contradictions they face have prompted some to question the purpose of what they do and who they are as teachers.

I have argued throughout this discussion that the solution is a rights-based model of disability for all children, including those identified as having SEBD. Without this change the dilemmas and challenges teachers face when trying to implement contradictory and confusing practices and policies will remain. The teachers who participated in my study suggested that supporting learners who are identified as having SEBD is both difficult and rewarding. It involves facing

frustrations brought about by working within a performative and unrealistic inclusion-based agenda. A new culture that is responsive to the rights of all individuals in schools is needed.

## **Chapter 10: Conclusion**

### **10.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I summarise the contribution made in this thesis, give an overview of the ways in which I addressed the research sub questions, outline areas for future research and practice, and acknowledge the limitations of the study. My aim was to find out what it was like for teachers to support learners identified with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream primary schools. I reflected on the stories the teachers shared with me as they described their experiences. Ball's (2003) work on teacher performativity, Oliver and Barnes' (2012) perspectives on models of disability and disability rights, Hargreaves (1997) and Kelchtermans (2005) perspectives on professional identity for teachers, and Wright (2009) and Macleod's (2006) recognition of the different perspectives through which children are regarded, have all informed my analysis of what the teachers told me; they supported my interpretations of the teachers' current roles and how they might be perceived. I have considered the relationship between teachers' professional identity and well-being and the expectations imposed upon them. By reflecting on the way in which teachers seem to construct discourses about why they feel some children exhibit disruptive and challenging behaviours, it has been possible to develop an understanding of how this impacts on the relationships they form with the children they teach. The expectations placed upon teachers in light of curriculum, policy, accountability and behaviour management have led to stress and pressures in their role. In addition to these pressures, I suggest that teachers also experience confusion due to the complexities and contradictions they are faced with when trying to support learners identified with SEBD in an education system which incorporates policies guided by different models of disability. Bolton's (2014) guidance relating to the way in which reflective practice can support teachers' self-awareness of what they do and how they feel about their roles has brought an additional dimension to the analysis of their narratives. This study identifies that confusion and contradictions experienced

in their work, demonstrated through the teachers' emotionally charged narratives, have enabled them to reflect on, and question, their teaching role.

Mainstream primary school teachers need to critically reflect on their own responses to the expectations placed upon them, decide how this impacts on what they believe is appropriate for the children they teach and collaborate with other like-minded teachers. By using the rights-based model as a framework for their reflections, a radical change across the system would take place. This might begin to address the attitudes, beliefs, practices and relationships in schools which teachers say are causing them tensions, dilemmas and dissatisfaction.

In the subsequent sections of this concluding chapter, I describe how the research questions that guided this study have been answered. I then consider what this research tells us about the field of primary education which incorporates learners with SEBD and reflect on the implications for future practice. The limitations of this study are addressed and this then leads to suggestions about possible next steps pertinent to further research in this field. I also identify the contributions this study makes to research.

## **10.2 Returning to the research questions**

In this section I summarise how the five sub questions used to focus this study have been answered. I have discussed the minutiae in depth throughout this thesis, but now provide a brief overview to demonstrate the responses to each of the questions.

1. *How do expectations in relation to policy and curriculum impact on teachers' feelings about what they do?*

The teachers recognised that policy and curriculum were not always appropriate for meeting the needs of the children they taught. They referred to the heavy workloads they had and how this led to high stress levels and worry about their abilities to fit everything they had to do within their days. As a result of this, they all acknowledged that it was necessary to work beyond the typical working hours that are identified in their contracts.

They talked negatively about the expectations placed on them and how the system of accountability and performance-led pay provided even greater concerns. They talked of their worries about how slow, or low, attainment and pupil progress might impact on their own professional performance.

Some teachers seemed to be more resistant to the changes in policy and disagreed with the assessment-led system, whereas others seemed more positive and talked about how they embraced the challenges of showing themselves to be good or outstanding teachers.

Some teachers also commented that the pressures they faced were having an impact on the attrition rate and suggested that this was why some teachers (including one who took part in this study) had left the profession.

## *2. What is it like to support learners who are identified as having SEBD?*

Every teacher confirmed that the challenges they faced as part of their role of educating 'typical' learners was made even harder when also supporting children identified with SEBD. They talked about the difficulties they faced in implementing and providing additional support that addressed the children's social and emotional needs.

They suggested that the curriculum was often not relevant to the children they considered to have SEBD.

They talked about the children, identified as having SEBD, in different ways. Their descriptions seemed to correlate with perceptions of children being 'bad',

'mad', 'sad' (Macleod, 2006), or 'immature' (Robinson, 2011) and described how their responses to children in light of these descriptions related to the way in which they perceived them.

Despite these deficit-related ways of regarding children, teachers talked about how they liked the children who exhibited challenging behaviours. They described how even the most difficult behaviours did not prevent them from developing affectionate feelings for the children. There was an underlying feeling that despite being wary of the behaviours and tired because of the extra pressures the children brought to their teaching, they retained positive relationships with them.

3. *How do the additional needs of children identified as having SEBD impact on the teachers' feelings and experiences?*

Participants described how the behaviours of some children affected the learning of others in the classroom and that this then disrupted their teaching. Some described how they felt 'on edge' because they had come to anticipate behaviours which would necessitate negative responses and sanctions. They explained that the needs of the children meant that their planning, differentiated teaching and expectations of pupil progress were affected by the children identified as having SEBD.

The teachers felt it was important to provide additional support for the parents and families of children identified as having SEBD and SEN. They described the importance of enabling families to develop their parenting skills so that they could support their children more effectively. They also suggested that without this input, the chances of progress, achievement and aspiration would be less. Two of the teachers considered this to be a vital part of their role; yet two others described different pressures they experienced because they felt threatened by parental expectations. This they claimed, was linked to the pressures of performativity and the government guidance to parents (that they should expect their children to reach specific levels of attainment even though the teachers considered these levels to be unrealistic).

4. *How do the experiences of supporting children identified as having SEBD in mainstream classrooms influence how teachers feel about the expectations placed upon them?*

Teachers seemed to experience emotional turmoil and confusion about their roles. Some of the more experienced teachers described being confused by what was expected of them in terms of their teaching obligations. They felt that the children's expectations of them, as their teachers, were not the same as the expectations from those who they were judged by and held accountable to.

They described how their experiences and feelings of success or failure when meeting the expectations of their role could result in them questioning what their purpose was as a primary school teacher. They seemed to appreciate that there was a difference between helping children to develop as individuals and preparing them for knowledge based tests. This, they felt, led them to question what they did. The confusion between what they felt they *should* do and *must* do seemed to raise ethical questions for them related to what their role as a teacher was becoming.

Some teachers recognised that the experiences they had of working with children identified as having SEBD made it very difficult to meet the expectations placed on them. This meant that they felt they had to make choices between doing what they felt was right for the children and doing what was expected of them by their managers.

Others however found their role as 'special' teachers who worked with 'special' children rewarding. They talked about how they enjoyed working with the children and how important this role was to them and their professional identities seemed to be enhanced as a result. These teachers saw themselves as being different to teachers in other schools.

5. *How do these experiences influence how teachers feel about what they do, professionally and/or personally?*

Every teacher acknowledged that their job impacted on their personal lives. They described how they needed to continue to work at home and they often talked about the children (and the needs that they had identified the children as having) with their families. They seemed to need to reflect on and talk about their concerns to help them cope with the challenges they faced. Some teachers also described how their heavy workloads took up a significant amount of their personal time and reduced the amount of time they could spend with their own families.

Teachers talked about the impact that their jobs had on their personal well-being. One described how she had needed to take time off work because the job had made her ill. Others described high levels of emotion, stress and personal doubt as to whether they could continue in their current role.

They described how the job was changing the way they taught and how they were not happy about that. They felt that because of the pressures they were under to demonstrate pupil progress and attainment, they had to then place pressures on the children to learn. One teacher explained that this resulted in a knock-on effect, whereby she was stressed and cross and she felt that this then led to children feeling stressed and cross. The dilemma for the teachers was that they recognised that their experiences of working in a performative and pressured environment was affecting their teaching for the worse and they did not like that.

The professional behaviours of teachers seemed to be diverse. Some embraced the challenges they faced, others complied because they felt they had to, some refused, and all seemed to show combinations of each approach at different times. The way they presented themselves to me, and my



interpretations of them in terms of their professional identities, showed conflict, confusion, resilience, insecurity, and anger. They also seemed happy, fulfilled, accepting, warm and friendly. Each of these traits overlapped between the professional and personal and it became clear that the two were inseparable.

### **10.3 Implications for policy and curriculum for teachers supporting SEBD**

The pressures on teachers to demonstrate subject-specific levels of attainment and progress of the children in their classrooms has resulted in consistent and increasing concerns about their workload. Surveys carried out by teaching unions (NASUWT, 2014; NUT, 2014), accountants (PWC, 2001) and the Department for Education (DfE, 2010) show that the challenges teachers face have not lessened since the implementation of the current performance-led system of education. The surveys, however, do not focus in depth on the additional challenges of supporting learners with SEN, and more specifically, of SEBD. This study identifies that this part of the teachers' role provides even further concerns and frustrations. The teachers who participated described the problems of trying to teach children from a curriculum (DfE, 2013), which they felt was inappropriate for their social and emotional needs, and the implications of this for inclusive practice. The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfEE, 1994; DfES, 2001) had promoted an inclusive approach to supporting learners for whom the generic curriculum was inadequate and as a result the structure and processes in schools attempted to reflect this social model of education. The current priorities for performance and high achievement however are exclusionary for some children (Clough, 2005) and teachers have had to change their approaches in light of this. In some cases, this has meant that teachers resort to using the psycho-medical/individual and deficit based discourse to provide an explanation and excuse for why some children are not able to reach the academic learning targets set for them. The concern is that the medical model is not just reflected in the practices and perspectives of teachers, but it is now becoming policy to return to categorisation and exclusion. The SEN Code of Practice Green Paper (DfE, 2011b) called for the need to

“remove the bias towards inclusion” and to put an end to the “unnecessary closure of special schools” (para 2.46, p51). Teachers are being encouraged to return to the previously maligned practice of medicalising children and teaching using a deficit model (Oliver, 2013). The SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015) seems to reflect the ‘mad’ perspective described by Macleod (2006), in its description of the links between “social, emotional and mental health” as a category of special needs. The DfE sustains the ‘bad’ perspective in their description of children whose behaviour requires discipline, control and penalties if it is deemed to be inappropriate. From this perspective, the inclusion of children who do not fit within the pre-determined attainment-based system is seen as problematic, and this is playing out in data related to school exclusion. Figures released by the DfE in 2016 showed that the number of children excluded from school in the year 2014-2015 rose by 110% in North Lincolnshire, by 303% in Barnsley and by 357% in Middlesbrough (DfE, 2016b, Statistics: Exclusions data, 21.7.2016). A spokesperson for the DfE said that “every child should be able to learn without disruption – that’s why we’ve given head teachers more powers to tackle poor behaviour” (DfE, 2016c media release, 4.10.16). The current education policies and guidelines have set the inclusive agenda and practices back years (Oliver, 2013).

#### **10.4 Understanding the implications of the use of the labels and models in teaching**

In Chapter 2, I discussed the literature pertaining to the use of labels and terminology relating to special educational needs, and of social and emotional behavioural difficulties (SEBD) in particular. I explored how labelling children can negatively influence views, beliefs, practices and expectations (Norwich, 1999). Teachers are more likely to develop and change their approaches to teaching and attitudes towards children if they have been given a label (Clough, et al. 2005) and this may result in stigmatising, unfairly judging or excluding them. This labelling may deny children the opportunities to be seen as equals to their peers and prevent them from participating and learning in school in a way which is appropriate for them. What is more, organisations and structures

in the education system require teachers to identify and categorise children based on their (dis)abilities and to explicitly demonstrate how their teaching addresses the differences between learners (SEN Code of Practice, DfE and DoH, 2015). The teachers in this study, working with children who they identified as having aspects of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, demonstrated that they position these children in ways that resonate with Macleod's (2006) and Robinson's (2011) theories.

Oliver and Barnes (2012) and Runswick-Cole and Hodge (2009) have argued that the labels associated with the psycho-medical/individual model of disability perpetuate divisions between children in schools. They argue that these models place limitations on learning and teaching. Some teachers in this study demonstrated that they felt pity for some children and presented themselves as teachers who were going 'over and above' to help the children and their families. Other teachers showed no pity, and instead seemed to blame the children for making their roles so difficult and challenging. Regardless of the teachers' attitudes towards the children, they all demonstrated that they face dilemmas which can be seen in their approaches to teaching. The conflicts between the social and medical models of disability were evident in their practice. For example, Rose described how she has provided interventions for some of the children in her school who she felt were not making progress. She talked about a range of assessments that were carried out to identify children's social and emotional strengths and difficulties. These assessments and the resulting 'diagnoses' indicate a view that the children have deficits within them which have led to learning and behaviour difficulties. For Rose, these interventions<sup>14</sup> were an effective way of supporting the children and she confirmed that they had a positive impact on future assessment scores. However, in the same conversation, she described how social factors, usually in relation to children's disadvantaged living conditions or as a result of poor parenting were affecting their opportunities and abilities to learn. In response to these factors, she talked about providing parenting skills and drop in sessions for parents who she felt needed support and advice. A further pressure, also

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<sup>14</sup> See appendix M for a map of provision of interventions identified in all four schools that participated in this study

linked to the social and inclusion model of disability, raised concerns for her. She explained the pressures on her and her colleagues to provide interventions, such as nurture group sessions, but to ensure that children were returned to their mainstream classrooms as quickly as possible so that they were providing an inclusive learning experience for the children. Rose described how one child had needed additional time in the nurture group because she felt he was not ready to reintegrate back into his mainstream classroom. It seemed as if the support the child needed had to be provided within a pre-determined time-scale (in this case, one school term) rather than using the child's needs and ongoing development to structure the amount and length of support provided.

In Appendix I, I present my story/fiction (Clough, 2005) of one teacher's school day. In an extract from this story, I demonstrate the conflicts and challenges Val faces when supporting two learners in her class. Each child demonstrates behaviours which suggest social and/or emotional difficulties and look to Val for support. The pressures on her to provide differentiated and inclusive teaching is challenged when faced with the behaviours demonstrated by the two children,

*The bell rings at 8.50am and Val takes a deep breath and opens the classroom door that leads out onto the playground. She greets her class and responds to their comments and questions. Paul is nowhere to be seen and she wonders if he will be late or absent. The children clatter into the building, unravel their scarves and lunchbox straps from their necks and noisily sit down. Val picks up the register and says good morning to each child in turn and marks them in. As she begins to explain the lesson objectives for literacy, the door crashes open and Paul enters, he kicks a table leg and swears at another child. It is too early for the teaching support assistant as she doesn't arrive until 9.30 and so Val stops talking to the class and goes to Paul. She tries to chivvy him, physically and emotionally, to his seat, takes the football from under his arm, flinches as he tries to reclaim it, but maintains her grip and gives him a piece of blu-tac to fiddle with in the hope that he will settle down quickly. Thankfully he does, and her quickened senses and heart*

*beat return to norm. She returns to the lesson objectives. An hour later the Maths lesson begins and Val works closely with the lower ability learners whilst Paul and the rest of the class work at 2, 3 or even 4 sub levels higher than her group. She worries at the breadth in levels and differentiates to meet their needs and abilities, but does not always feel she is successful. The practise SATs paper is scheduled for three days' time and she is pushing the children hard to learn and remember the calculations process they will need to use. Molly, one of the quieter children in the group, puts her thumb in her mouth and fiddles with her hair. She tries to talk about her parents' separation to Val, but there is neither the time nor opportunity for personal chats. Val feels the tears sting her eyes and the lump in her throat. This girl thinks she is responsible for her parents splitting up and is not able to focus on the maths problems, which is no surprise. However, the threat of 'progress every twenty minutes' hangs over Val and she daren't stop to talk to Molly. She gently pulls the thumb from Molly's mouth and hands her a pencil and reminds her how to tackle the calculation.*

The social and emotional needs of some children result in behaviours which disrupt or prevent learning, either for themselves or for other children (Visser, Cole and Daniels, 2002). This story shows how the inclusive provision in their mainstream classroom for Paul and Molly was not necessarily what they needed at those particular moments. Val's responses to what they did suggested that she was unable to give them the attention that she felt she ought to give because the pressures on her to teach the timetabled lessons had to be given priority. There is no way of knowing if Val felt pity or sorry for the children (Oliver and Barnes, 2012) but her emotional responses to each of them indicated that she probably felt responsible for caring for them; the lack of opportunity for her to do this in her classroom context presented dilemmas for her.

## **10.5 Understanding the implications of an academic focused curriculum for SEBD**

Goodson (2014) and Ball (2013) described the reduced levels of ownership and autonomy teachers have. The statutory curriculum and national educational policies shape what teachers must teach, how they must measure success – and failure – and how they must categorise the children who do not fit within the system. I acknowledge that policy and curriculum are not the only influences on practice, and I refer back to my discussions in Sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.5 as a reminder of this. The narratives shared in this study showed that different teachers working in different schools had a range of experiences and their views and provision varied considerably, even though they worked within the same policy context. It is helpful, though, to reflect on the impact that policy, as one influencing factor, had on the teachers' experiences. Some of the teachers in this study described how they were disillusioned and felt that they had little power or opportunity to change their professional circumstances. Osborn et al. (2000) and Webster and Mertova (2007) identified teachers' increasing levels of dissatisfaction and increasing attrition rates. Responses to the government's workload survey (DfE, 2010b) showed that the situation for teachers had not improved; and the surveys in 2014 demonstrated that teachers' professional well-being and stresses had yet again increased (NUT, 2014; NASUWT, 2014). The teachers who participated in this study talked about being unhappy, about attrition and the stresses they experienced. The current education system which is shaped by the neoliberal influenced ideology of marketisation and individualisation is not working (Goodson, 2014, Ball, 2016). The teachers in this study explained that they were frustrated by the expectations imposed upon them. They felt that they were best placed to make decisions about how the children in their classes should be taught and about what aspirations and attainment levels were appropriate for them. They talked about how they felt frustrated and angry because their workloads were heavy because they were trying to do so much. Policy recommending a responsive curriculum for all children will go some way to address concerns regarding inclusive and exclusive practices. Current guidance seems to be promoting exclusion of those

children who are unable to conform to expected behaviours or abilities. By moving away from this 'one-size-fits-all' curriculum, teachers will be encouraged to confidently teach to individual needs and the expectation of taking children out of their classrooms so that the remainder can learn unhindered will be lessened. Inclusive practice is more than just geography though. It is not just about where children are placed to learn, such as in a corridor, as I observed in visits to school A. A child-centred curriculum which builds on the suggestions by Alexander (2010) and a code of practice which moves away from deficit models of disability and additional needs may demonstrate that inclusion is acceptable and to be encouraged. A disability rights-based approach would provide the emancipation from an education system which is currently shaped by divisive ways of regarding individuals (Oliver, 2013; Oliver and Barnes, 2012; Runswick-Cole and Hodge, 2009; Browne and Millar, 2016; Peters, Johnstone and Ferguson, 2005). The teachers in this study labelled and categorised children because the policies and guidance they must work within promote this. Any philosophical or ideological discussions about inclusive practice are made extremely difficult or even muted while such policies are in place. Therefore, a move to a rights-based model which incorporates the views and critiques of the experiences of disabled people would provide teaching which reflects the individual rights of all children to receive an education which provides opportunities to succeed.

## **10.6 Implications for teacher education**

There are also implications for teacher education and continuing professional development for teacher trainees and teachers. Promoting a rights-based approach to teaching will ensure the views, beliefs and practices will change for teachers. McDonnell (2003) identified two structural levels in provision: a deep level which encompass values, beliefs, views and theory; and surface level which focuses on organisational and day to day operational practices. By critically analysing current practice on both levels it may be possible to identify the changes needed to re-shape provision and teaching approaches in schools.

Teacher training which promotes Peters, Johnstone and Ferguson's (2005) principles for addressing the rights of all (dis)abled children would address McDonnell's structural levels. Training teachers to shape their practice so that it incorporates "(1) non-discrimination; (2) the right to life, survival and development; (3) the right to be listened to and taken seriously; and (4) the best interests of the child" (Peters, Johnstone and Ferguson, 2005, p144) may provide emancipatory practice for children and teachers. This emancipation may address the divisive and deficit approaches used by teachers in schools because it would re-position and re-evaluate the ways in which teachers perceive some of the learners in their schools. So, for example, teachers like Val, Claire, and Amy would not be put in a position where they feel they have to blame children for the pressures they face in an educational climate characterised by performativity. They would be empowered and encouraged to recognise each individual child's right to an education which reflects their strengths and needs. The structural changes to curriculum design, teaching, assessing and accountability would need to recognise each individual's right to learn within an environment which engages, enthuses and motivates them. A child-centred approach which is strongly influenced by the right to learn in a way which is appropriate for them, rather than a subject-centred approach which identifies the need to reach prescribed, but sometimes unrealistic levels of attainment could become the fundamental structure for all learning classrooms. Therefore, teacher training which has this approach to learning, planning and teaching would go some way to addressing the pressures and stresses the participating teachers talked about in this study. Teacher training which promotes child-centred teaching approaches for individuals in environments which are focused on achieving success and attainment rather than performance and competition (Barton, 1997) may address current teachers' experiences of confusion, contradictory practice and frustration.

## **10.7 The next steps for research in the field**



So where do we go from here? This study has shown glimpses of other aspects that need to be taken into account in terms of researching SEBD and professional identity. I have considered the links between professional identity and the emotional ‘terrors’ the teachers experience as a result of the changes to policy and expectation upon their roles. I suggested in Chapter 9 that the narratives shared by the teachers seemed to show that teaching approaches for children identified as having SEBD and professional well-being were linked. It would be interesting to explore more fully the relationships between teachers’ perspectives on children categorised as having SEBD and the ethos of the schools in which they work. It would be useful to investigate how schools are (or are not) achieving a balance between pastoral provision for children identified as having SEBD whilst also meeting the performative requirements. Such information would generate a better understanding of the breadth of the provision available, and other schools and teachers may find it helpful to learn from practices elsewhere when reviewing and developing their own.

Some of the narratives in this study made reference to the ages and stages of teachers in their careers. The range of ages of the participants showed that there were some differences in their views about their roles – for example, Nicole talked about her passion and determination to ‘make a difference’ which reflected her enthusiasm at the beginning of her career; whereas Val explained that the job was so challenging that it was “why people my age go”. A longitudinal narrative study of teachers in which they are enabled to reflect on their perspectives and experiences at different stages in their careers would provide a deeper understanding of what it is like for them to teach children identified with SEBD.

This study has only considered the narratives of teachers who work in mainstream primary schools within the state sector. As the range of schools is broadening to reflect academies and free schools, the curriculum and policies are also broadening. For example, it would be interesting to consider the perspectives of teachers who work in schools which have developed innovative

provision (such as those discussed by Swann et al. in *Learning Without Limits*, 2012). This may provide some insight into the ways different learning environments impact on teachers' construction of perspectives about children identified as having SEBD.

This study has only presented one perspective – that of the teachers. I have explored how teachers may position the children they teach as they explain, excuse or shape the relationships they have with them. It would be helpful to find out how the children feel about learning in an environment in which targets, results and progress is the priority. I know that many children are aware of these pressures because of the observations I made in the classrooms. I have seen teachers informing children of their targets, learning objectives, success criteria and achievement levels during my visits. It would be interesting to talk to those children who are identified by their teachers as having SEBD and find out their perspectives on what it is like to learn in a mainstream primary classroom. In light of the discussion about instilling a rights-based model in society, and in schools in particular, a fundamental part of this process would involve talking to those who are currently considered to be 'different'. Gaining the perspectives of disabled children about what it is like for them in school would provide a useful basis from which teachers and policy makers could shape practice which addresses entitlements and rights to an education for every child. I am mindful that the fundamental basis for changing the experiences, feelings and attitudes of those working with individuals, in this case children, who are disabled, must be guided by the experiences, feelings and attitudes of the children. A rights-based model places the children's rights and entitlements of full access to education at the heart of its structure (Barton, 1997). This can only be done when children are given the opportunities and support to share their views.

For me, a priority for future study is to investigate how children, who are identified by their teachers as having SEBD, see themselves. I would like to find out if the children have constructed views of themselves in relation to the

'bad', 'mad' and 'sad' perspectives. Macleod (2006) identified that this was the case in her research with children aged between 14 and 16 and she confirmed that it did have implications for the relationships between teachers and children. I have not identified similar research which focuses on primary aged children, but the findings about primary teachers' perspectives in this study suggest that it is an important area to consider. An understanding of if, and if so, how, primary aged children position themselves in terms of their behaviour ('mad', 'bad' or 'sad'?) could help teachers' to understand children's discourse in this area better. It may also provide more understanding of the way that labelling affects their access of the curriculum. A greater in-depth knowledge of how the children feel about themselves could help teachers reflect on which teaching approaches would be most appropriate for individual children. I also suggest that an understanding of children's perspectives of themselves would provide an insight into how "*children's perceptions of themselves are shaped by their treatment by others they interact with*" (Oliver and Barnes, 2012, p110). As they get older, their perceptions become firmly embedded in their own practice (Oliver and Barnes, 2012) and they may perpetuate the perspectives of 'mad/bad/sad'. The possibility that this cycle of 'normalised' inequality (Oliver and Barnes, 2012) begins in primary schools raises concerns for how SEBD is understood and taught and merits a longitudinal study into children's views.

### **10.8 Limitations of this study**

This is a small-scale study. In order to explore teachers' experiences in depth it was only possible to visit four schools and talk to nine teachers, and the conversation with one of those (Tom) was very brief. I believe that my data generated rich insights into teachers' experiences, but appreciate that it is not possible to generalise from my findings without further research.

I acknowledge that the presentations and interpretations I have made about the teachers are based on what they told me during one, two, or at the most, three

conversations. I have attributed views and practices to them based on what I saw and heard, but this does not mean that they are always consistent with what they felt. Kelchtermans (2009) describes the development of teacher identity, based on their self-image and self-esteem, as fluid and dependent on changing events and experiences. This means that teachers' positionings and views of children, themselves and what they do is changeable. It is not possible to identify the extent to which these changes occurred because this was a short-term study; a longitudinal study would be needed to consider fluidity and change in teachers' positioning of children. It is also possible that such changes in their perspectives of children and views of their experiences may be different depending on who they are talking to.

I feel that my relationships with the teachers were empathic and effective for encouraging them to talk about their feelings about their work. I retained my position as a teacher/researcher who had knowledge and experience of the field. This may have led to comments where the teachers felt they could share their emotions and personal perspectives, but the interpretations I have made of what they told me are reliant on my own previous experiences and knowledge. My own frustrations associated with teaching children identified as having SEBD in mainstream schools has influenced the way that I interpreted what they told me. However, I have tried to make this positionality explicit and I have never claimed to take an objective or outsider's stance. I feel that my position has been beneficial, but also appreciate that another researcher who does not share the same prior experiences may have gathered and analysed data differently to the way I have done.

I have tried to gain an understanding of how the teachers' comments related to their emotions. Bolton's guidance (2014) on the emotional reflections of practitioners was helpful in developing this approach, but I appreciate that my definition of emotions may be different to the teachers'. This has not been a psychological study into expressions of emotion, but it has incorporated the emotions shared within the narratives told. I have been able to correlate the

narratives of individual teachers with those of others and this has provided insights into similarities between their perspectives.

Teachers provided informed consent to take part in this study. Part of the information shared with them identified my interest in pastoral and nurturing support in primary teaching. This, together with my own examples from practice about supporting children through nurture and therapeutic support, may have led to teachers placing greater significance on the information they shared with me. They may have placed a focus on the breadth of strategies they described to me because they assumed that that was what I was interested in. Does this matter? Possibly not. I encouraged them to develop and extend their narratives so that they included more than just a description of what they did. They were able to share their opinions and feelings about the strategies, and this process provided greater insight into their practice and enabled them to explain why they were providing such strategies.

Teachers seem to have developed a practice whereby criticism and cynicism about governmental policy and guidance is commonplace. As a former primary school teacher, I have listened to (and taken part in) my colleagues' discussions where it was common to complain or moan about the current system. It was not unusual to be part of a bit of 'Gove bashing' in the staffroom where the former secretary of state for Education was heavily criticised for his comments and policies. This study was not designed as an opportunity for continuing such criticisms, but I must accept that the frustrations and concerns emanating from governmental policy have provided the stimulus to question the practice and expectations that underpin this research. I have tried to be rigorous in the use of the government's own documentation to support an understanding of their stance and then use this to reflect on how this impacts on practice. Ultimately though, the outcome of this study has led to critique of the direction in which educational policy has gone.

## **10.9 My contribution to knowledge**

This study has developed a greater understanding and depth into the perceptions of teachers who are teaching children identified as having SEBD in mainstream primary schools. It provides greater detail of how the already existing pressures of working within a performative regime are impacting on the teaching practices in the classroom. I have synthesised concepts identified by Oliver and Barnes, Ball and Macleod and used these in my analysis of teachers' stories and views. This has then enabled me to demonstrate how high levels of stress and frustration are forcing teachers to position children according to their additional needs, and argue that this process ultimately leads to a return to more exclusionary approaches.

These contributions can be summarised as:

- Giving space to teachers' views about their perspectives of what it is like to teach children identified with SEBD in mainstream primary schools.
- Understanding of the impact of the performative culture on teachers' experiences of teaching SEBD.
- Understanding of how teachers are constrained and frustrated by the challenges of implementing inclusive teaching approaches for children identified as having SEBD.
- Consideration of a rights-based model to emancipate teachers from the constraints of contradictory teaching expectations and approaches when working with children who exhibit disruptive, disturbing or challenging behaviours.

## **10.10 Summary**

Teachers who took part in this study shared their experiences, emotions and concerns about what it was like for them to teach children identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream schools. They described the challenges of testing and measuring the progress of children and

how some children who are not able to demonstrate progress can impact negatively on the performance data for the individual teachers and the school. The teachers described how they felt about the children they taught and the challenges they experienced. They shared stories which seemed to indicate that they categorised some children. The perspectives identified by Macleod (2006) and Robinson (2011) which were consistent with deficit views of some children were evident in their stories. This led to conflicts for the teachers, professionally and emotionally. The teachers were often limited in the ways they supported some children. They had to balance working within a performative-led culture whilst trying to provide inclusive and appropriate learning experiences for the children. Attempts to achieve a balance between what they felt they ought to do (to meet policy expectations) and what they felt they should do (to meet the entitlements of children) led to excessive workloads and complex emotional responses.

This study has given teachers the opportunity to share their stories about how they feel about their roles. The focus on their emotions and experiences has highlighted how their professional identities are influenced by their relationships with the children they teach. Teachers talk about wanting to make a difference to the children they teach and seem to see this as their purpose. They are concerned that the current system is forcing them to put pressure on the children in their classrooms to achieve higher and greater levels of attainment. Teachers are struggling to cope and are not convinced by a system which places measurable data before the needs of the child. What they feel they are really doing is making the children that they have identified as having SEBD, feel unsuccessful, unhappy, excluded and like failures. Val's final, tearful comments to me as we concluded our conversations seemed to sum up the concerns that were shared by others,

*We all need to stand up and do the Emperor's New Clothes thing because actually the system is naked, there's no two ways about it, it is broken but until enough people stand up and say no, it's not going to change, is it? We're just going to keep getting pressured to do more with less and eventually people will crack! (A:V:2).*

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Pen portraits of schools**

All the schools are based in the north of England. They were all state schools when they were visited. Each of the pen portraits are taken from the 'description of the school' section from the Ofsted report website to ensure that the portraits provide the same type of information and are presented objectively. My own interpretations of the schools and my experiences and feelings about them are provided in the thesis when and where appropriate and relevant.

#### **Pilot School**

This school is similar in size to an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked after pupils, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.

#### **School A**

This is a larger than average primary school and is situated on the outskirts of a city. Many of its pupils come from socially advantaged areas. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. An above average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, but very few are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but a more than average number have statements of special educational need.

## **School B**

This larger than average sized primary school serves a large estate on the outskirts of the city. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. An average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average, but the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school has additional provision for pupils whose learning needs cannot be met in their own classrooms. A greater proportion of pupils than is normal enters or leaves the school other than at the usual times.

## **School C**

This average sized school serves an area characterised by social and economic disadvantage. The school is located in a former mining town. There are high levels of deprivation and poverty within the community that this school serves. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well above average. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very high. The vast majority of pupils are White British.

## **School D**

This school is of average size and is situated in a village on the outskirts of a city. Pupils are of largely White British heritage and come from a range of social and academic backgrounds which are broadly average. Few are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are taught in the main school is broadly average and the school benefits from an additional provision which provides support for pupils with language and communication difficulties.

## Appendix B

### Questions asked in the pilot study

Information about the school	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Number on role?</li><li>2. Number of classes?</li><li>3. Describe the catchment area and the typical backgrounds of the children and their families</li><li>4. Tell me about your most recent Ofsted inspection in relation to pastoral provision</li><li>5. Are any children at your school considered to have SEBD?</li><li>6. How would you define SEBD at your school?</li><li>7. How do you and your colleagues provide support for all children in school?</li><li>8. Do you have any specific support for children who you consider to have SEBD?</li><li>9. Which class/support do you feel I ought to observe and why?</li></ol>
Information about teaching	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What is your role?</li><li>2. How are you involved in supporting children with SEBD?</li><li>3. What is it like teaching children with SEBD in your</li></ol>

	<p>mainstream classroom?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Tell me about the support you give to children you have identified as having SEBD.</li> <li>5. What is it like teaching a child with SEBD?</li> <li>6. In your dream school, what would provision for SEBD look like? What would you do?</li> <li>7. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your role, your feelings about what you do, or about any particular children you work with?</li> </ol>
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## Appendix C

### Examples of reflections following schools' visits

#### Pilot study reflection

	Time-span	Content	HC comments
1	0:00.0 - 6:43.3	<p>First visit, spoke to SH who is the SENCo and GR. School ofsteded last week, expecting to go down from 1 to 3. Left them all low, and upset. They accept that some of the feedback was valid but feel very hurt as grading is based on data and not on all children. Report due out Friday 19th.</p> <p>Very happy for me to go in. would love to learn from you and at the starting point of this type of pastoral input. Said am happy to share my knowledge. Worried that this is a mismatch and that there may be ethical imbalance as they may not see me just as a researcher but then I also feel that this is a pro because I have empathy with them and this may improve my relationship and questioning with them.</p> <p>We have different agendas and I need to be flexible. Will be doing their emotional literacy analyses in Sept. Planning an intervention room and building work to set up a special place for children to go which will be wonderful to be involved in. They have commented that there is not a shared ethos and vision for supporting EBD in the school so already getting an idea of how it is at this school. Lack of consistency in school. Their learning curve will be interesting and to compare with other school who are more clearly defined. Will be interesting to compare with School D.</p> <p>Methodology: agenda difference. Use of Dictaphone OK but need more practice with this and how to use the buttons!</p> <p>Need to get onto hard drive and save prior</p>	<p>Need to take into account the time they have available for me, SH was on a limited time availability, my agenda will be different to theirs and I need to be more aware of this. Like the idea that this is about how they feel.</p>



		to transcription. Interruptions hope haven't spoilt recording. Keep Dictaphone turned up to high. Questions pre-set were being mentally ticked off as we were going through. Will be interesting to see how their timetable of provision I can be involved with due to my timetable. One of the lessons I have learnt is that the questions you put together before you go in are not necessarily appropriate for the agenda that school is expecting or perhaps I was just expecting to do too much. Graham Gibbs YouTube video on interviewing suggests going in with themes and topics rather than questions specific interview research qus and that is something that I'm going to take on board.	
2	6:43.3 - 7:19.5	When i go back in Sept/Oct I do need to make sure that all consents are completed from parents, children and staff but GR says this is not a problem. Procedure needs to be followed though from a paperwork point of view.	

### Reflection following first visit to School B.

	Time-span	Content
1	0:00.0 - 3:45.1	A reflection on my visit to ACP. I was met by Izzy who is in charge of the behaviour and nurture group provision within the school and she introduces herself well at the beginning of the recording I made with her. Very positive, very enthusiastic, very passionate member of staff who is clearly very happy in her role very proud of what they achieve. She does make it clear that she feels and the staff at School B provide much more than the basic, I began to feel slightly concerned that the staff I'm meeting with and interviewing are all very positive whereas certainly at School B and at School D that there is a very similar feel to School D, I'm not, I didn't get that passion at School C but there is certainly a drive and a purpose where its whole school approach and this nurturing school feeling is clear in three of them and I'm not so sure that that is the same for School A, it will be interesting to talk to the staff at School A Annoyingly I forgot to ask Izzy to take some photographs but she said if there is anything else she

		<p>could do she would be more than happy to help, so I will email her and she was incredibly quick to respond to her email last time. So perhaps she could take some photos of pastoral provision within the school whatever she might perceive that to be. She has arranged for me to meet with Nicole who used to be a student 3 years ago at uni and the conversation we just had in the corridor did not feel like a student tutor relationship so I think there is a big enough gap there for us to have some equity in our conversation. The other person I'm going to be observing is Bea who I haven't met yet but Izzy feels confident that she would be happy for me to be there. I'm also going to observe a theraplay session and the beginning bit of the nurture group which I'm really looking forward to. It's clear that the breadth of provision in that school is enormous and its far reaching, I just get this vision of a sort of octopus with its tentacles out in everything, it's not just one thing which Izzy was extremely clear about.</p>
2	3:45.0 - 6:50.7	<p>So where are we at in terms of this data collection? School C school visits have been completed now. I observed four sessions all of which were three of which were curriculum sessions with year groups and one was the nurture group and I spoke to Rose who is the SENCo and INCo so I just got her view of that. She did talk a little bit about previous experiences of what the school used to be like and that was mirrored by Izzy at School B today - this is how we used to be and this is how we are now. The visit to School D are now complete and that had a combination of provision and passion and interest. My first visit to School A, the way that they approached the selection of things for me to see and the conversations to have were different to those in School D and Schools C and B as they were showcasing excellence, which is understandable you want people to see your good side and I have to take that into account but School A were more like, yes come and see how bad they are, come and see how hard it is, so there was much less positive feel about it. Val isn't SENCo or INCo, she is quite a disillusioned part time year 6 teacher but I spent time with Amy as well and I'm talking to her next week and she seems to ... I don't know, she's involved with the SEN and behaviour is something that she's interested in so I don't know it's just a different feel in the school, it's their interpretation of what I'm looking for, I've used the same letter, I've used the same discussion but their interpretation is that I'm looking for the bad stuff, behaviour that's bad</p>
3	7:19.8 - 7:44.3	<p>Whereas Izzy at School B said behaviour is not about being bad, it's about being vulnerable which is a very interesting perception. I have forgotten to give Izzy the consent forms so I will email them to her tonight together with the request</p>

		for photographs.
4	7:44.3 - 11:42.9	So, I'm going back to School A next week on Monday when I will do my final observation and then interviews with Claire and Amy and have a quick chat to Val about the photographs and I will then go back to School B on 31st and that will be all the schools visited. I have got possibly one other school if its felt appropriate, I don't know what kind of school it is but its X one of the reasons she says that they don't have students from uni is because of the level of behaviour problems that they have so it might be useful to go and see her and perhaps I don't know how I could get a balance, I don't think I could identify schools that are negative and schools that are positive but I did choose the positive breeds positive and downward spiral sort of examples with Izzy so I'm saying that that exists but whether or not I could identify schools that have that is another thing. The provision in School C might have nurture and a nurture group but it's very different in its, in the way its promoted compared to School D and School B and there are no nurture groups but there are one to one sessions and social activity small groups at School A.
5	11:35.8 - 15:49.6	I'm just reflecting on my own sort of speaking within the interviews or talks, it would look really stupid if I didn't say anything, I try and reiterate what they have said or build on or question what they've said or just to guide it a little bit so we can move onto things that I might need to know about without it sounding like an interview situation. I worry, I keep doing that by relating to my own experiences and I feel I have to do that to some extent to build my own credibility and a shared sort of understanding even though I might not, I don't know their situation, I don't have that current view, I can demonstrate some aspect of empathy between what they're doing and what I've done in the past or between what they're telling me and what I have done in the past so that i feel helps the conversation to be real and help it move on and to be perhaps less formal? But I don't want to swing any bias or affect how they answer or respond I don't want to put words in their mouth and I'm worried that there is that potential for that to happen. Perhaps just by being aware of it I'm reducing it to some extent but perhaps it's a bit unavoidable. In terms of analysis, I must look at this Oracle analysis that one of the students talked about in her dissertation that I marked that might be, Oracle coding I think she called it and it might be worth looking more closely at. I think I'm gonna have to try and identify how I'm going to approach this analysis - what I did with School D was transcribe it all and then look for themes. That's something I can do with all the other schools and all the other conversations I keep picking up and making notes about examples of provision that I feel

		<p>are nurturing or supportive or address aspects that children may have in relation to SEBD. I'm not sure that that's the purpose of my research though. Paul said what are you trying to achieve, what are you looking for, what is it like to be a teacher is the key but I need some sub questions now to break that down and use in my analysis. What is it like to be a teacher perhaps what kinds of issues or ...?</p>
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## Appendix D

### Interviews – participants and identifiers

School	Name	Quantity and length of interviews	Interview code
A	Val	1 – 18 mins 2 – 45 mins 3 – 2 mins	A:V:1 A:V:2 A:V:3
A	Amy	27 mins	A:A:1
A	Claire	9 mins	A:C:1
B	Izzy	1 – 94 mins 2 – 29 mins 3 – 24 mins	B:I:1 B:I:2 B:I:3
B	Nicole	43 mins	B:N:1
B	Bea	14 mins	B:B:1
C	Rose	1 – 17 mins 2 – 14 mins	C:R:1 C:R:2
D	Yasmin	1 – 89 mins (with Tom) 2 – 20 mins 3 – 26 mins	D:Y:1 D:Y:2 D:Y:3
D	Tom	With Yasmin, as above for last 31 mins	D:T:1

## Appendix E

### Overview of observations

School	Class/year group/intervention group	Length of observation (minutes)
A	Small group – behaviour support	24 mins
	One to one support (TA and child)	10 mins
	Year 4	11 mins
	Year 5	40 mins
	Year 6	8 mins
B	Foundation 2 (Reception)	25 mins
	‘Theraplay’ intervention group	25 mins
	Year 5	23 mins
C	Nurture group	49 mins
	Foundation 2 (Reception)	30 mins
	Year 2	31 mins
	Year 4	14 mins
D	Assembly (Social Emotional Aspects of Learning SEAL)	25 mins
	Circle of Friends intervention group	22 mins

## Appendix F

### Examples of observation notes.

#### School C. Nurture group/theraplay observation. 31 March 2014.

	Time-span	Content	Speaker	Observation notes	HC comments
1				School C. 31 March 2014. This session is recorded in the Nurture Group room which is specially designed and dedicated for nurture group support. Izzy and her colleague run the session and children from different classes and taken out of their mainstream classes to attend. There were 6 children in the session.	This session was nurture group and theraplay. Although the children are used to having different adults in the session, it was not felt appropriate for me to observe as this may make them feel uncomfortable and be distracting and so I was asked to participate fully - in the same way that the staff were. The children seemed to be happy to work alongside me. The session was recorded as a reminder of key events and comments.
2				Before the session began, Izzy went through their nurture group profiles for each child to give me an idea of their needs and reasons for being included in the sessions.	Refer back to initial meeting with Izzy for further information about the way the group is run and the way children are identified for support.
Izzy and HC go through each child's NG file prior to the children arriving.					
10	16:46.7 - 24:48.2	So, now what we're doing this afternoon is theraplay. It will be absolutely fine, you will have to do some dancing and be silly. There will also be a hand massage, there's a lot of singing as well,	Izzy	Staff set up the room and resources and then go to collect the children.	Izzy explains structure of session to HC.

		and you can join in, just copy us.			
11	24:48.2 - 32:27.8	<p>Now children, who can notice something different? What do we say when we have visitors in school? Hello, Hi, this is Helen who has come to work with X and me and Helen works at the university for big people. So, can you all introduce yourselves ... OK so how are you feeling today ... let's have a look at the faces, sad and a bit happy ... and disappointed, that was one of the feelings we talked about a little while ago wasn't it ... perhaps your teacher was feeling a bit disappointed as well ... thank you very much for sharing. Ok, where would you put your picture ... on green, so how are you feeling today, are you feeling happy then? Yes, let's just think about C now, let's listen to C ... L go and fetch two cards, I am really impressed with how you have been sitting there, you are having a really good week ... you've been grounded at home? How did that happen? Did you not make the right choices at home? ... K, thank you for sitting smartly, how are you feeling? ... (child describes an event in her home)</p>	Izzy and children	<p>Children sit in a circle on cushions and go around and introduce themselves. Each child has a photo on the wall and there are emotion pictures so they can place themselves on the emotion scale. Children are reminded to speak one at a time and listen to each other. Successes by the children (in class or at home) are celebrated. 'Cards' are given out when children are 'caught' being good. Every child given the chance to reflect on how they are feeling and match this to the emotions pictures.</p>	
12	32:27.8 - 40:42.7	<p>Oh dear was she, she might have had some tummy ache, mightn't she? Sometimes when people feel a bit worried or upset they do get upset tummies. Like Mrs X this morning, I knew we had all these important visitors and I</p>	Izzy and children	<p>Children sing the hello, how are you won't you tell me your name song "Hello how are you won't you tell me your name, hello 'name' we're so glad that you came. The children then go into pairs with one adult</p>	



		wanted to show them how brilliant we are and I got all worried and Mrs Smith felt a little bit sick too. ... Thank you for sharing with us, thank you. Children we are going to do theraplay now so I'd like you to leave your cushions and go and make a circle on the carpet. So, remember children we have got only three rules in theraplay, who can remember them? No hurting - yes that's a good one. Ooh good suggestion, think of something similar, I like that rule. We have to stick together but the most important rule is that we have to have fun!!		and have some hand massage with hand cream - the children really enjoy this and they give as well as receive hand massage. Everything goes quieter. They sing "Oh lotion, oh lotion, on xx hand, it feels so soft it feels so grand"	
13	40:42.7 - 45:52.9	OK come back to a circle for me please and hold hands. Good, well done. They then massage the hand of the person next to them. Oh look, I can tell xx has got a giggle in him, don't let it out!! Keep it in, oh it's like a volcano, he's going to explode with a giggle ... look at you all smiling and giggling!! Now we're going to play the Zoom and Eek game, sending zoom round and then if you want it to go the other way you go eek!	Izzy and children	Child asks what to do during the Zoom game and is reassured that he can do whatever he wants and that it is up to him - he is given time to think and then carries on happily.	
14	45:52.9 - 56:24.7	OK, right then, if Mrs X uses the word Blueberry then we can leap up ... blue bottles, blue paper, blackberry, blueberry!! Ok let's play Rhubarb and custard! Now we can play 'Little Sally Walker walking down the street"	Izzy and children	words are then given out that sound like blueberry to tease the children and see if they are listening. When Izzy says Rhubarb, the children respond with Custard in the same manner (high voice, whisper, giggling, shouting, singing etc.). The dancing finishes with children dancing and	

				singing in the circle - they really enjoy this and take part to varying degrees of confidence.	
15	56:24.7 - 59:32.0	Ok, so now its quiet time, (everyone uses whispering voices) and children are given one piece of chocolate and at the same time a positive comment is made about them. 'Helen, thank you very much for coming to play today, I noticed that you were joining in really well, thank you very much.'		The session finishes with a good-bye song. 'Goodbye everyone, goodbye everyone, goodbye everyone, we're so glad you came to play'.	

**School A. Claire. Year 5 class – English lesson. 17.03.2014.**

	Time-span	Content	Speaker	Observation notes	HC comments
1				Claire's lesson, school A. 17 March with Y5 class. I was asked to go back to school A one week after my main observation visit to see and talk to Claire. She had been away ill which the head and she attributed in part to stress of working with challenging children in her class and it was felt it would be useful for me to see it. The lesson began at 11am and lasted 39 minutes.	
2				On the wall is a list of children's 'rights' - right to be safe, go to school, learn and have fun, all children have an education no matter who they are, be given information, we have the right to privacy, learn from easy to understand and honest information, to reach my potential, right to Join any club if OK for	

				my age, if I have disability then I will get special help to lead full life, be allowed to relax and play, say what you think and have it taken seriously. It seems from the language and phrasing that these are written and devised by the children.	
3				School mottoes: small A4 piece of paper on the noticeboard this is not very noticeable. There is no such thing as an innocent bystander; we seek to enable others and to include people of all abilities in our school and in our lives; Live the values and be a caring and responsible global citizen; I can make a difference, together we can make a difference; I will listen, think, work hard and make the most of all my abilities; we choose respect.	
4	0:00.0 - 5:18.6	Boys, let's be nice to each other, you've just had a year group assembly on bullying, haven't you? You weren't in assembly? Well that is a shame. I'm not saying you are a bully but some of this behaviour if it gets repeated can be called bullying, can't it? Right, let's draw a line under that and make sure that no one else ends up in tears at lunchtime.	Claire	The beginning of the lesson involves Claire and a small group of boys who have been misbehaving at break time. She refers to the assembly held before break about bullying. It is not possible for her to begin teaching the planned lesson without addressing the issue. The children then do some counting in German and reflect on the Spanish they did earlier. There is a good relationship between Claire and the children and it is quite informal. Claire talks about how much she likes the German language. She asks the children to talk to each other while she finds the correct	

				programme on the Interactive Whiteboard that will provide German teaching. This involves her clicking on the appropriate game/picture to make it happen. This forms the starter of the lesson and the children are all sitting in their places at their grouped tables.	
5	5:18.5 - 9:17.2	Erm, enough thank you ... thank you! Right let's move on ...	Clair e	Displays around the room: 'Dear Doris' box for problems that the children may have - they can post their note and I expect that Claire will respond as appropriate. There is a visual timetable and a rainbow chart - each colour gives guidance regarding behaviour: Green - OK, Blue - warning, Purple - lose 5 mins, Grey - work in different room, Yellow - see head teacher, Orange - phone parents and work alone, Red - parents are brought in to school. There also work boards all around the classroom on the walls which say: honesty, courage, loyalty, respect, encouragement, appreciation, understanding, compassion, thoughtfulness, creativity, determination, kindness, humility, resilience, obedience, co-operation, freedom, trust, responsibility. Looking into other classrooms I can see these words in there too.	
6	9:17.2 - 29:59. 2	Right, now I don't want shouting out thank you, erm, I can still hear voices ... right then ... oh		Soothing classical music plays while the children write. There is one TA in the room	The children are very focused, there is a good work ethic, though

		good thinking! Hands up please, don't shout out. Be quiet! I have had enough. Right I want some peace and quiet now. We are now going to ...[begins next part of lesson] OK. I spent some of my weekend being creative and planning for you ...		who is not linked to a particular child during this observation. 2 boys from another class come in to get their behaviour cards signed Claire as they had been in her streamed maths class from before play. The children get louder during the session – Claire says 'I can't hear the music!' and the children go quieter	they are bubbly - this does not seem to affect learning, but requires Claire to keep on top - is this level of "keeping them down" tiring?
7	29:59.2 - 39:07.8	So I have started writing a poem, it's not brilliant but it's a start ... right so off you go. I'm looking to see who is the first to get the Learning Objective down and the date. Collaborate guys, so you can work in twos perhaps ... right so let's get to it ... you can magpie from mine if you want, do you understand what you have got to do? Yep!			

## Appendix G

### Excerpt from transcript asking for participants to take photographs

2:44.3 - 3:16.1	Some from us then wise, what can we do to help? Photos is the other thing. I can send them all through on email. From nurture group wise, here are our picture books so I can just email you these pictures, so if you have a look and let me know what you're after	Izzy
3:16.0 - 3:38.0	Well it's more of what you think about what pastoral provision you have here, what is it that you have, what works, what doesn't work, what is it about this place about what you do	HC
3:38.0 - 3:43.3	Ah, so like the values, yeah,	Izzy
3:43.2 - 3:49.0	You know if you gave a child a camera and said take pictures of things that you think are important and they come back and they are an insight into what they think ...	HC
3:49.0 - 3:52.1	Oh yeah, I could do that ...	Izzy
3:52.0 - 3:56.7	Yeah, well that's basically what it is, except it's not the child taking the photos, it's you. What I might think is important, is not what you think is, so I don't want to take the photos, cos this is about what you think	HC
3:56.7 - 9:49.3	Right, right, OK [distraction - broken iPad screen!] [interruption by a child who comes into the room] OK, so anything really then, you don't have anything you want? Yeah, that's fine. I've got some ideas. OK, anything else you need? I'm going to send you the values. What about this, we've got postcards that we send to the parents, you can have one of those, and I'll send you the values. I'm trying to think if there's anything. What do you want to know?	Izzy

## Appendix H

### Example of inductive coding from an excerpt of a transcript

<b>Whole excerpt taken from the transcript</b> <i>When she [member of the Multi Agency Support Team who works with the school] comes back in, we'll show her that and we can look at it and talk about it and we can say this is xx and then, I know intervention workers only do so many weeks from MAST don't they, they kind of do 6 weeks and then , I think she stayed longer cos she's been there from the infants and then they might say, right its family, cos family CAFs are coming in now aren't they , so she might say something for family cos I think she's offered mum and dad painting and they've not gone out of the house, Mum can't leave the house it seems so they've not gone for it and I don't think they want to expose themselves to a new audience of people cos I don't think they feel safe in a group of parents going 'my name's ...' [it's very threatening] yes and frightening, so if we can do it, if we can do it here, it's safer, safer isn't it than strangers cos he doesn't know us yet, does he dad? So that's our ... that's our kind of ...(D:Y:1)</i>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Example from the transcript</b>
Other agency involvement	<i>When she [member of the Multi Agency Support Team who works with the school] comes back in</i>  <i>we'll show her that and we can look at it and talk about it and we can say this</i>
Parents	<i>Mum can't leave the house</i>  <i>I don't think they feel safe in a group of parents going 'my name's ...'</i>
Resources available	<i>intervention workers only do so many weeks</i>
Responsibility of the school/ teacher to address issues	<i>so, if we can do it, if we can do it here, it's safer</i>

## **Appendix I**

### **Fictional accounts based on teacher narratives**

#### **Val's Story**

*Val arrives at her classroom on Monday morning with a mixture of feelings. Working in Year 6 in the typical 1960s built primary school on the edge of a city in northern England as a class teacher ignites happiness, enthusiasm and anticipation for the events that lay ahead, but then she remembers Paul and the little group of ten year olds who add apprehension and concern to her positive feelings. She knows that the success of the day will depend on Paul in particular; if he needs a lot of support to take part in the activities in class or if he is not a 'happy bunny' today then she knows she will suffer. She puts her overflowing bag of marking, lunch and headache pills on the floor next to her desk and sighs. Her shoulders sag with the weariness of so many emotions; she loves teaching, but she is worried and nervous. Paul can be such a friendly boy with a good sense of humour, but his social and emotional skills are underdeveloped and he can be very unhappy, angry and challenging with little warning and virtually no understanding of why. There is little wonder that Val feels as if she is treading on egg shells every day. She looks around the classroom, smiles when she sees the art work produced by the children that is waiting to go on the walls and then turns the laptop and digital projector on and plugs in the memory stick that holds the lesson plans that she was up until midnight preparing ... it is now 7.15am and a new day has begun.*

*At 8am Val goes into the staffroom and makes herself a cup of tea to drink whilst she listens to the staff briefing. The head teacher, Susan, reminds every teacher of the increasing drive for pupil progress, "We need to evidence progress every twenty minutes ... we must show excellence and outstanding teaching and learning to Ofsted. We could get the 'phone call any day" she says.*



*Val exchanges glances with colleagues but says nothing. The challenge to ensure every child makes progress is not easy. She reflects on the lessons she has planned for the week, knowing that she will have to raise the pressure and expectations on the children. This goes against her pedagogic beliefs and against what she believes the children in her class need. She wants to inspire, enthuse and excite them and to encourage them to grow holistically, not just in terms of academic knowledge. The discussions that she has with them that have been stimulated by reading stories of human endeavour, moral dilemmas or social and emotional plights affirm her role as more than just a deliverer of adverbial phrases and preparer of SATS answers, but you can't show progress in twenty minutes by reading them a story, so that will have to stop.*

*The bell rings at 8.50am and Val takes a deep breath and opens the classroom door that leads out onto the playground. She greets her class and responds to their comments and questions. Paul is nowhere to be seen and she wonders if he will be late or absent. The children clatter into the building, unravel their scarves and lunchbox straps from their necks and noisily sit down. Val picks up the register and says good morning to each child in turn and marks them in. As she begins to explain the lesson objectives for literacy, the door crashes open and Paul enters, he kicks a table leg and swears at another child. It is too early for the teaching support assistant as she doesn't arrive until 9.30 and so Val stops talking to the class and goes to Paul. She tries to chivvy him, physically and emotionally, to his seat, takes the football from under his arm, flinches as he tries to reclaim it, but maintains her grip and gives him a piece of bluetac to fiddle with in the hope that he will settle down quickly. Thankfully he does, and her quickened senses and heart beat return to norm. She returns to the lesson objectives.*

*One hour later the lesson is over and the children file into the hall for assembly. After ensuring Paul is sitting between two children who will neither disrupt or be disrupted by him, she goes to Sally's classroom. She feels weary already. Paul has needed continuous reminders to complete*

his work, has found it difficult to concentrate, and Val has had to keep one eye on him and give the rest of her attention to the group task she was leading. Sally, the year 3 class teacher, asks about the changes to the timetable due to the visiting book seller and they look at the timings for the rest of the morning. Val makes a mental note to change Paul's visual timetable and to inform him immediately after assembly in the hope that the last-minute alterations will not cause instability and any further outbursts.

Throughout lunch Val marks the children's literacy books whilst eating a sandwich. She regularly looks at her watch hoping that she can write two comments and a new target in all 31 books before the afternoon lessons begin, but it is not to be. One of the lunch time supervisors enters the classroom and shouts at Paul to "get in and sit down!" Val listens to the events that have led to a small fight between Paul and another child in the playground and records the incident in the journal she keeps about Paul and the issues that arise due to his social and emotional difficulties. She will share the incidents, fourteen in the last four days, with his one to one support assistant who sees him twice a week. The supervisor leaves and Val and Paul talk quietly for fifteen minutes. Paul calms down and responds well; he seems to like being with Val. He talks about his unsettled start to the day at home and Val and he share a joke. Val feels reassured that he is now calm enough to start the next lesson, and she looks longingly at her half-eaten sandwich and the unmarked exercise books as the bell rings to signal the start of the afternoon.

The rearranged Maths lesson begins and Val works closely with the lower ability learners whilst Paul and the rest of the class work at 2, 3 or even 4 sub levels higher than her group. She worries at the breadth in levels and differentiates to meet their needs and abilities, but does not always feel she is successful. The practise SATs paper is scheduled for three days' time and she is pushing the children hard to learn and remember the calculations process they will need to use. Molly, one of the quieter children in the group, puts her thumb in her mouth and fiddles with her

hair. She tries to talk about her parents' separation to Val, but there is neither the time nor opportunity for personal chats. Val feels the tears sting her eyes and the lump in her throat. This girl thinks she is responsible for her parents splitting up and is not able to focus on the maths problems, which is no surprise. However, the threat of 'progress every twenty minutes' hangs over Val and she doesn't stop to talk to Molly. She gently pulls the thumb from Molly's mouth and hands her a pencil and reminds her how to tackle the calculation.

As the bell signalling the end of the school day rings, Paul happily bounds over two tables to Val to collect his football; he has had a good afternoon. Val narrows her eyes at him, letting him know that he should have gone around, rather than over, the tables, but she judges the time to nag him as inappropriate, she does not want to spoil his good humour before he goes home. Paul winks at her, gives her an affectionate and impromptu hug, takes the ball and yells, "See ya tomorrow, Miss!" Val cannot help but feel affection for him and likens him to the 'Girl with the Curl' rhyme, "when he's good, he's very very good, and when he's bad, he's shocking" she mutters.

The two-hour staff meeting has a long and varied agenda. Val yawns as she listens to the explanation for how to calculate the percentages to show rates of progress for class progress and thinks about how these figures can be incorporated into her performance related targets. She knows that she must set highly aspirational figures, but feels a lack of control as to whether the targets her head teacher considers acceptable will reflect the reality of the children's ability to learn and her ability to teach. There is no doubt in her mind that low attainment will result in a poor Ofsted inspection grade ... and for the twentieth time that day, she sighs and shakes her head. She wonders idly as the meeting goes on if she has enough savings to contemplate early retirement, she has another 15 years to go before the retirement age of 65.

*At 6.15pm, eleven hours after arriving at school, she crams 62 exercise books and a half-eaten sandwich in her bags, finds her car keys and walks to the car. She wonders if the current Secretary of State for Education and head of Ofsted really realise that this is what teaching is like. She shares her thoughts with another teacher as they walk into the car park and says,*

*“We need to all stand up and do the Emperor’s New Clothes thing because actually the system is naked and there’s no two ways about it, it is broken, but until enough people stand up and say NO it’s not going to change, is it? We’re just going to keep getting pressured to do more with less and eventually people will crack.”*

*Val unlocks her car, drops her bags on the back seat and wonders if to mark the books before or after tea.*

### **Nicole’s story – phone call to her Mum.**

	<i>Phone rings</i>
<b>Nicole</b>	Hi Mum, it’s me. I thought I’d ring ‘cos I haven’t had chance all week, I’ve been so busy.
<b>Mum</b>	Hello love, it’s good to hear your voice. Your Dad and I were saying last night that you must be busy because we hadn’t heard from you. Are you alright? Do you still like it at that school?
<b>Nicole</b>	Aww, Mum, it’s the best! I’m a bit tired, but it’s only two weeks to the Christmas holidays, I can’t believe I’ve nearly finished this term!
<b>Mum</b>	Are you coming home for the full Christmas week? I want to feed you up a bit, I bet you’re not eating properly what with you working all those silly long hours and then up till the small hours planning and whatnot.

<b>Nicole</b>	Yes Mum! Jordan and I will be home on the Tuesday, then that will give me time to get sorted out and tidied up at school and I want to update their assessment profiles before Christmas. It'll be lovely to see you and Dad though.
<b>Mum</b>	So how is it going this week? Have you had any more trouble with that naughty boy, what was his name? You know, the one you talked about last time, the one who swears and kicked you. He hasn't hurt you anymore has he?
<b>Nicole</b>	Mum! He's only four and he didn't mean to kick me, he really doesn't know any better, he sees so much fighting at home bless him. Anyway, he's having a good week and I love him to bits, you should have heard him read to me last Friday, it was incredible. He was sounding out and talking about the pictures, he would never have managed that in September, I was so proud! They keep laughing at me in the staff room 'cos this was last week and I'm still banging on about it, I am so blooming proud! Jordan had a bit of a moan about it last night when we were having our tea, but I'm not having that, I think he gets jealous of the way I love my class. I'm ever so protective of them, but probably more so of little Joshua and the way his behaviour is improving. Anyway, they're my little chicks and if I don't speak up for them then it's a bit of a bad job!
<b>Mum</b>	I know love, but it's hard to understand for us because we're not teachers and we can't imagine what it's like for you, especially when you get so wrapped up in it and all emotional. One minute you're shouting and crying and the next you're happy as anything, it must be hard for Jordan. ( <i>The line goes quiet for a few seconds</i> ) Erm, have you though anymore about applying for that job at that nice school near us?
<b>Nicole</b>	Mum! I told you that I don't want to work in schools like that, all leafy lane and

	posh parents! That's not for me, is it? I would be so bored. I love it here. Yes, alright, I know its hard work and the local area and community is a bit rough but I like being in a school with all these needs. You know these children need us, we are their comfort and their safe place, I am the safe home for them.
<b>Mum</b>	Oh Nicole! Mrs Broad says you'd have no problem getting an interview and it's a bit of a promotion what with being in charge of all of reception and nursery in that lovely new unit they've got and it would be a bit more money so you and Jordan can save up for your deposit on a house and get out of that city.
<b>Nicole</b>	Mum, for goodness sake! When will you understand? I'm not in it for the money. It's in my heart and I'm happy ...
<b>Mum</b>	... Well that's not what you said when Ofsted complained about the children not getting cleverer or making progress as they expected!
<b>Nicole</b>	Yeah, well, I was really tired and stressed out. I do have to be a bit brave to work here because it is a struggle to get their scores up but I don't want to work there – the children get loads of stuff and time and attention and it would make all the stuff like the government changes, pay progression, levels and Ofsted less scary, but we're a really good team here and leadership look for things to help me out. You know, we all sing from the same hymn sheet and we look after each other, I love working with them. Did I tell you that we went out for a meal to that new restaurant a couple of weeks ago?
<b>Mum</b>	That one near John Lewis's? Yes, I think so, isn't that where you had that lovely sticky toffee pudding?
<b>Nicole</b>	Awww, yeah, it was gorgeous and the menu was amazing. The waiter thought I was a bit weird though 'cos I asked him if

	I could take photos of the menu to take back to school so I could tell the class about it; you know, only 3 out of my class have been to a proper restaurant, not counting MaccyD's and KFC of course.
<b>Mum</b>	<i>(Sighs)</i> Flipping heck Nicole, do you ever stop thinking about work?
<b>Nicole</b>	<i>(Laughs)</i> Oh Mum, you know I love it. I just think it's good to help the children know what it's like in the outside world and not just around the local area. I would love them to aspire and aim high and do alright for themselves, get what they want out of life you know, but how can they if they don't know any different? The parents can't always do it, they need to want more too, it's breaking the chain, that's what my job really is ... teaching them life skills and show them expectations have to be high, that's when I'll have done my job.
<b>Mum</b>	Do you know Nicole, I think you need your own soapbox love, you do run on a bit!
<b>Nicole</b>	I know, it's just in my heart, I can't help it. You know it's hard, its draining, emotionally and physically and mentally, but it's in my gut and these children need us, it's the best job in the world and tons more important than being tired.
<b>Mum</b>	Well, I'll still be glad to get you home for Christmas and look after you for a bit, I've never known anyone work as hard as you do, you want to watch you don't burn yourself out, but I'll give credit where its due, you do do a good job, it can't be easy with hose poor little things coming from such horrible homes.
<b>Nicole</b>	Oh, I know, do you know I had three child protection notes logged in my head before five past nine this morning, I had to hold it in until dinner when I could talk to Izzy, our special needs co-ordinator. Poor little chicks, but at least they're safe

	with me. Oh! Did I tell you, I'm going to do some research with one of the other teachers, I'm so excited!
<b>Mum</b>	Research into what love?
<b>Nicole</b>	Well, we're going to do this 'Barriers to Reading' project where we invite some of the harder to reach parents and their children to our little school house, you know, the one I told you about with the kitchen and living room? Well, anyway, they're going to come in with their child, just 3 or 4 at a time, and we're going to do activities and family stories and stuff, it'll be really good. We want to get them in and help them enjoy reading and playing with their children and break the chain a bit so they're not so negative about school. I'm so excited to be asked to be part of it!
<b>Mum</b>	Well done love! It sounds very interesting and perhaps those parents will be a bit more supportive in the future and it'll be nice for the little ones. ( <i>Muffled sounds in the background</i> ) Anyway, I'd better go, your Dad's just poured me a cuppa and QI is on telly in a minute and do like that Stephen Fry, he is funny.
<b>Nicole</b>	Ooh, I love that, I'll finish this report for the child protection meeting tomorrow and watch it too.  I'll see you soon Mum, give my love to Dad.
<b>Mum</b>	Alright my lovely. See you soon. Bye!



**Internal monologue: 'Preparing for the report to the School Governing Body' by the school Special Educational Needs coordinator, Yasmin.**

*It is 7.10am and Yasmin gets into her car for the forty-minute drive from her home to the school.*

*She begins to talk to herself as she drives.*

Ok, so this is it. I've just got to get through the day, meetings with parents, two observations of the NQTs and then the Governor's meeting at 4 o'clock, I hope it goes OK, I'm nervous already, but I have to demonstrate that the school has improved thanks to the new SEN and behaviour system. I need them to see that I have got it sussed and that it is better now. Ha! Not that it could have been much worse, things were pretty bad last year with children running up and down corridors, refusing to work, arguing parents, complaints and staff either shouting and crying or going off sick all the time. Oh, thinks were awful when I think about it. Anyway, what will I say? What are my key aspects? How am I going to do this? Come on Yasmin! You can do this!

Right, well, I'll give out the report first, I reckon I'll need fourteen copies and then I'll explain that it covers four main aspects: children's progress and learning, staff development, parental support and monitoring and data. Right! So, I'll start by saying welcome and that I will be talking them through the report and will be happy to answer any questions at the end, then I won't get distracted.

Erm, yes, we will start with the children's progress. OK, so, over the last two years there have been challenges in supporting children with behaviour problems in the school. This has primarily been due to the challenging circumstances many of them face in their homes and their low baseline scored when they join us in the early year's foundation unit ... erm, yes, so they have low baseline scores and the data says that this is relevant for 11% of the children. Some children have not experienced

good quality parental attention and a secure upbringing as parents and toddlers. As a school team, we recognized that this had an impact on their behaviour, communication skills and learning and so we decided to implement a whole school focus on a talk and language based curriculum at the start of the new school year, last September. This has changed the focus of much of our teaching as we now ensure that children are encouraged and supported to develop their talk and language based skills. This is noticeable in all lessons across the curriculum and also in one to one or small group intervention sessions. Children are beginning to improve when they talk about what they do, or don't, understand about their learning. They articulate through repeating, reciting, in conversations, in drama or even in singing subject knowledge so we know they have understood it, and this then helps their memory and retention and writing. Right, then I will ask them to look at the graph and the percentages and levels of achievement from the first term that demonstrates progress and I mustn't forget to tell them that although I haven't got the full data for this term yet, it is still improving ... I'll say upward trajectory ... ha! They'll like that! We have also identified that through our nurture groups and one to one sessions, those children with significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties such as bereavement, neglect and the children who are carers of parents or siblings and those who are in care, there seems to be fewer emotional outbursts and crises. This is because we are being proactive and supporting them to address issues before they come to a head and cause trauma. The children know that they can ask for help now, and because we are more on top of each individual's situation, there is less fire-fighting, so to speak, and a calmer atmosphere which helps them to speak up.

Phew, OK, right onto staff development. The retirement/leaving of three members of staff last year and the appointment of four newly qualified teachers has been influential in the change of priority in school. We found that some former colleagues had struggled in supporting and addressing behaviour issues and were demoralized. This seemed to affect whole school morale and a positive outlook on school practices and I, as

SENCO, found it very difficult to motivate those members of staff in particular and move them from a negative, critical, blame type of culture to a nurturing, 'give the children a chance' type of learning environment. The new staff are positive and because they are enthusiastic, have more empathy and have known only our new approaches and behaviour policy, we have no real issues in terms of implementing the nurture groups, one to one sessions, parent support groups and proactive strategies. The staff have said that it can still be challenging at times and so we have introduced a peer coaching system. This means that each pair of teachers can reflect, share issues, come up with solutions and just generally support each other, it is the staff nurturing approach and this is necessary, effective and important. We now feel that the whole team is pulling the same way and that they all have a shared vision for the children; this is an improvement on how we were before.

Onto parents! We have always had mixed relationships with some parents, ranging from those who do not want to engage, those who are wary of schools because of their own previous experiences, those who complain about everything, to the other side of things and those who want to be involved and want to support their children ... yuk, that sounds clumsy, but I need to get the message across to the new governors just want our parents are like, especially that chap from industry who looks like he's never lived anywhere like our school. Erm, yes, so ... we know that if we do not get parents on board then success will be limited and relationships will be patchy. The rota to ensure that at least two members of staff are on the playground every morning and afternoon means that there are welcoming faces and listening ears. I have blocked out my timetable on Wednesday and Thursday from 9-11am each week so that parents can come in and talk and know that I am there to listen. This is developing trust. We also have a Parent Forum where we talk about needs and goals and the forum group now takes the messages back to other parents who won't come into school. I was very pleased that it was the parents who identified swearing and alcohol on the playground and that they decided to put a stop to it. It is so much better if it comes from

them and not us because it makes us look less bossy and authoritative which wouldn't go down very well with some parents.

Erm, the monitoring and data ... heck, I'm at the roundabout already, I haven't got time to practice that now, but I'll try and get a few minutes before lunch. Perhaps Tom will do my assembly so I can proof read it again, get it copied and have one last read through. Oh well ... onwards and upwards ... it'll be fine, we've come a long way since last year.

"Morning Mrs Patterson!! How are you? Can you spare two minutes, I just need to let you know about the hand massage and yoga training we have planned for next Monday after school ..."

## Appendix J

### Ethical approval form

#### **Section B: Ethics Proforma**

- 1. Describe the arrangements for selecting/sampling and briefing potential participants.** (This should include copies of any advertisements for volunteers or letters to individuals/organisations inviting participation.)

Pupils will not be directly involved in the research process, the majority of data will be collected from the teachers, however, pupils will be present in each of the settings during the observations and so my presence will need to be explained. The most appropriate way for this to be done will be discussed with the teachers prior to the sessions and I will be guided by them, but the children will be introduced to me at the beginning of the sessions I will be observing and I will talk briefly about wanting to find out more about what takes place in the sessions. I will explain that I will make notes on what I see but will use no other recording strategies to avoid distracting them.

I will be guided by the head teacher in each of the schools about the necessity for informing parents; however, it is unlikely that explicit consent will need to be sought as there will be no change to the school day or any taught sessions.

Events involving some children that take place during the lessons may be discussed in greater detail with the teachers during the subsequent interviews but details of the children involved will be discussed confidentially and will be made anonymous.

The head teachers involved will have already expressed consent regarding the school's inclusion during the questionnaire process; however, consent will need to be confirmed prior to the interviews/meetings with each individual teacher (see appendix D). Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured. The option to withdraw at any point during the data collection process will be explained.

- 2. What is the potential for participants or third parties to benefit from the research?**

Opportunities to take part in the interviews and discussions about the provision of pastoral support for pupils in mainstream primary schools may lead to the identification of possible developments in support in mainstream primary schools for children identified with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This outcome will be shared with the participants in the research and also with other interested third parties through publication. Identification of effective practice and suggestions

for possible developments in mainstream primary schools, whether they have specialist nurture provision or not, will be made available to all practitioners who wish to broaden an understanding of strategies and practices in their schools. It is hoped that by sharing effective practice, children involved in nurture and pastoral support programmes will have access to improved support.

**3. Describe any possible negative consequences of participation in the research along with the ways in which these consequences will be limited.**

This study will investigate the breadth and detail of specialist nurture and mainstream curricular provision and how teachers involved in the provision perceive what they do. No preconceived judgements will be shared with the participants and however they judge their current provision they should feel comfortable and secure in sharing their perceptions. By explaining clearly that my intention is to find out what is happening in schools in order to develop an understanding of the types of provision available, the main focus of my involvement will be purely investigative at this stage and is not intended to test, examine or judge what takes place.

The participant teachers will be asked to share their views and feelings about the pastoral provision they give in their settings. By using a narrative inquiry approach, teachers will be asked to provide verbal narratives through media such as conversation, interview and retelling of scenarios; this will provide insight and opportunities for the researcher and teachers to reflect on the provision. There is no intention to ask teachers to share their feelings or reflections on events which make them feel uncomfortable and they will have the choice about which aspects they feel it is appropriate to talk about in greater depth.

It is possible that at some point during one or more of the sessions, some children will demonstrate behaviour that is inappropriate for the school environment – in fact – this is often one of the criteria for admission to the pastoral and nurture sessions. Having experience of working in these support groups in the past, I understand that it may be necessary to quickly withdraw from the environment and stop any observations taking place. I will discuss with the staff the best course of action and an appropriate place to withdraw to and await contact from them when I could return to the group.

It is also possible that some children may decide they would like to talk or work alongside me and as feeling part of a group is an important part of the nurture process, I am prepared to draw on my past experiences and respond to the children so that they do not feel rejected. I do not however intend to be a participant observer and so will ensure this is limited; possible ways to do this would be by positioning myself away

from many of the activities set out and by responding to the children's advances positively but apologetically whenever possible.

4. **Describe the arrangements for obtaining participants' consent.** (This should include copies of the information that they will receive & written consent forms where appropriate. If children or vulnerable people are to be participants in the study details of the arrangements for obtaining consent from those acting in *loco parentis* or as advocates should be provided.)

Consent form – school – signed by head teacher (appendix A)

Consent form – teachers involved in interviews (appendix D)

5. **Describe how participants will be made aware of their right to withdraw from the research.** (This should also include information about participants' right to withhold information.)

All participants will be made aware that if at any point they do not want to take part in the research, they may simply inform the researcher and all further involvement will be stopped. This will be explained to them at the beginning of their participation when the consent form is explained and signed by both the participant and the researcher. Prior to interviews, the right to withhold information will be explained.

The right to withdraw will be applicable until the final stages of the research process when the researcher will visit each participating school and share the outcomes of the study. Each participant will be asked to confirm that they are happy for their responses from the interviews to be included. Full anonymity at this stage can also be demonstrated.

6. If your data collection requires that you work alone with children or other vulnerable participants have you undergone **Criminal Records Bureau screening**? Please supply details.

Full CRB (enhanced disclosure) check completed in January 2009 as part of my role as Senior lecturer in Education with SHU in which I regularly make visits to schools to observe trainee teachers, however there will be no requirement for working alone with children during the process.

7. **Describe the arrangements for debriefing the participants.** (This should include copies of information that participants will receive where appropriate.)

Following the initial analysis of the data, arrangements will be made to revisit the participants to share the initial findings and preliminary outcomes. Confirmation of the information will be sought from each

participant and the full transcripts will be provided. All four participating schools will receive copies of the completed study.

- 8. Describe the arrangements for ensuring participant confidentiality.**  
(This should include details of how data will be stored to ensure compliance with data protection legislation and how results will be presented.)

All data will be stored on the researcher's personal home computer which requires password access.

The relevant paperwork such as questionnaires, field notes and consent forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and as soon as the data has been analysed any names of participants or schools will be removed and replaced with a letter or number key so that the information can not be ascribed to any person or educational setting. The analysis of the data will be a priority to ensure that any identifiable information is removed from paperwork as soon as possible following an interview or observation.

The data will be presented using the acknowledged format of "School A" or "Teacher B" to maintain anonymity and ensure confidentiality at all stages in the research process.

References to the schools will be very general and no geographical information will be provided in the data or final research study. Although a general description of urban or rural, and affluent or deprived statuses may be used together with a county location such as Yorkshire, Derbyshire or Lincolnshire, it is hoped that this will still maintain anonymity for the participating schools.

- 9. Are there any conflicts of interest in you undertaking this research?**  
(E.g. Are you undertaking research on work colleagues; or in an organisation where you are a consultant?) Please supply details.

No conflict of interest. Although I am a university link tutor for a small number of schools on the partnership list, it is not expected that my professional relationship as a tutor will have any impact as I am not involved in the pastoral and nurture support aspects in my role.

- 10. What are the expected outcomes, impacts and benefits of the research?**

Identification of effective practice and suggestions for possible developments in mainstream primary schools, whether they have specialist nurture provision or not, will be made available to all practitioners who wish to broaden an understanding of strategies and practices in their schools. It is hoped that by sharing effective practice, children involved in nurture and pastoral support programmes will have access to improved support. The teachers involved will have been given the opportunity to share their reflections and feelings about the pastoral



provision they give. This may be beneficial to their practice by encouraging a reflective approach and through discussion, may enhance their own understanding of and approaches to what they do.

The outcomes of the research will be shared with the Nurture Group Network and the Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Association (SEBDA); these organisations have a significant involvement in pastoral and nurture care for children in English schools and it is anticipated that the research may be published in their journals.

The benefit to the researcher will be increased understanding, knowledge and experience of the research process and the completion of the PhD.

**11. Please give details of any plans for dissemination of the results of the research.**

In accordance with the requirements of the PhD, the research will be prepared as a thesis and bound and submitted to the public domain.

**SECTION C : HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT FOR THE RESEARCHER**

1. Will the proposed data collection take place on campus?

- ☐ Yes (Please answer questions 4 and 6 only)  
☒ No (Please complete all questions)

2. Where will the data collection take place?  
(Tick as many as apply if data collection will take place in multiple venues)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Own house/flat                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Residence of participant        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Voluntary Organisation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Venue (e.g. Youth Club; Church; etc) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____                |  |

3. How will you travel to and from the data collection venue?

- ☒ On foot      ☒ By car      ☒ Public Transport  
☐ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Please outline how you will ensure your personal safety when travelling to and from the data collection venue:

Colleagues will be made aware of which schools are to be visited and when. Conventional practices involved with transportation to and from the schools will be followed.

4. How will you ensure your own personal safety whilst at the research venue?

Each of the schools involved will have been involved in the designation process to be a partnership school and as such have regular visits by mentors and university link tutors. There are no concerns with regards to personal safety during these visits.

5. If you are carrying out research off-campus, you must ensure that each time you go out to collect data you ensure that someone you trust knows where you are going (without breaching the confidentiality of your participants), how you are getting there (preferably including your travel route), when you expect to get back, and what to do should you not return at the specified time. Please outline here the procedure you propose using to do this:

A timetable of visits complete with times addresses and anticipated return times will be made available to a colleague. Should the colleague become concerned and if it is not possible to contact me then the named person on the timetable (my husband) will be contacted.

6. Are there any potential risks to your health and wellbeing associated with either (a) the venue where the research will take place and/or (b) the research topic?

☒ None that I am aware of  
☐ Yes (Please outline below)

7. Does this research project require a health and safety risk analysis for the procedures to be used? No

If YES current status of Health and Safety Risk Assessment.

I confirm that this research will conform to the principles outlined in the Sheffield Hallam University Research Ethics policy.

I confirm that this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Principal Investigator's signature	<i>Helen Childerhouse</i>
Date	10/05/2012

Supervisor's signature (if applicable)	<i>Caroline Bath</i>
Date	May11th 2012

## **Appendix K**

### **Participant Information Sheet.**

#### **Title of the study: Teaching SEBD in mainstream classrooms: Teachers' Perspectives.**

##### **Introduction**

For my doctoral study, I would like to find out teachers' feelings about, and their experiences of, supporting children who are identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. I hope to visit a small number of schools who have a range of provision and by finding out about what you do, what it is like and how you feel about it, I hope to put together an overview of what kinds of support is available, the teachers' perceptions and the impact this has on them.

##### **Why have you asked me to take part?**

- I have chosen schools, and more specifically, teachers in the local area who provide pastoral or nurture group support to children in key stages 1 and 2. As you are involved with these types of lessons, it would be very helpful for me if you would take part in this study.

##### **What will I be required to do?**

- If you choose to participate in the study then you will take part in informal interviews and allow me to sit in on some of the sessions you teach – this should take about a term to complete. There will be an initial meeting where you will be invited to share your thoughts about what it is like supporting children, some during the process when we can talk about what took place in the sessions that I watched, and one at the end when I can share the notes I have made with you. I will bring a Dictaphone with me so I can record what you say and will make a few notes as well.
- I would like to sit in on some of the sessions that you are involved in because it would be helpful for me to see what happens during sessions where you are supporting children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, but I do not intend to distract you from these sessions and will not interrupt you at these times.
- I would also ask you to take photographs of the learning environment when no one is present so that you can give a visual portrait of where you teach as well as a verbal one. No children or adults will be photographed at any time.

- We can discuss how many visits I make and when these will be so that they are mutually convenient.
- I feel that by asking you to take photographs and reflect on some of the sessions I have sat in on, we will have a starting point for some of our discussions; it might be that I ask you to explain how you were feeling at specific times or to talk about how the learning environment supports your teaching.

### **Where will this take place?**

- In your school.

### **Will I find out about your study and what you have written?**

- Yes, I will come back to the school and share my findings with you. I will share all transcripts with you after our interviews so that you can see what I have written and share your thoughts about them. You will be asked to approve what I include in the transcripts and you will have the opportunity to remove anything which you would rather not share.
- I would be happy to discuss the study and how I feel this might impact on the nature of pastoral and nurture provision in our primary schools. If you would like a copy of the study when it is complete I can arrange for this to be shared with you.

### **Who will be responsible for all the information when this study is over?**

- I am ultimately responsible during and after the research process. The study will be published as part of my PhD research but you are assured anonymity and will not be identified at any point in the study. I assure you confidentiality and will use codes and symbols within the data analysis instead of names of schools or individuals. As for the information, once I have completed the research process, all the data will be either stored in a secure file or destroyed as appropriate. The raw data will not be shared with third parties or used in other studies.
- Part of the research study process, however, is to collect information based on this particular aspect of education and look at how provision in schools could be developed. It is therefore possible that parts or all of the anonymised data and research will be published and shared with other teachers and so that they too can learn and benefit from your experiences.

### **What if I do not wish to take part?**

- Participation is totally voluntary. If at any point during my visits to your school you decide that you do not want to take part and decide to withdraw you can do so immediately and you do not have to explain why you wish to withdraw either. The final date for withdrawal will be two weeks after my final visit to the school when we discuss the transcripts from the interviews.

If you have any questions or want to talk about any aspect of this study (before, during or after it has taken place) then please do not hesitate to contact me. My contact details are:

Helen Childerhouse  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Arundel Building  
122 Charles Street,  
Sheffield. S1 2NE.  
Tel: 0114 225 6252  
Mobile: 07747440654  
E-mail: [H.Childerhouse@shu.ac.uk](mailto:H.Childerhouse@shu.ac.uk)

You can also contact my research supervisor:

Dr Paul Garland  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Owen Building  
Sheffield  
S1 2WB  
Tel: 0114 225 4821  
E-mail: [P.Garland@shu.ac.uk](mailto:P.Garland@shu.ac.uk)

## Appendix L

### Teacher Consent Form

#### **TITLE OF STUDY: Teaching SEBD in mainstream classrooms: Teachers' Perspectives.**

*Please answer the following questions:*

Have you read and understood the information sheet about this study? **YES NO**

Have you been able to ask questions about this study if you need to? **YES NO**

Have you received enough information about this study? **YES NO**

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study:

• at any time prior to two weeks following my final visit to the school? **YES NO**

• without giving a reason for your withdrawal? **YES NO**

Your responses will be anonymised before they are analysed. Do you give permission for members of the research team to have access to your anonymised responses? **YES NO**

**Do you agree to take part in this study? YES NO**

Your signature will certify that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study having read and understood the information in the sheet for participants. It will also certify that you have had adequate opportunity to

discuss the study with the doctoral student and her supervisor and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

**Signature of participant .....**

**Date .....**

**Name (block letters) .....**

**Signature of the researcher ...Helen Childerhouse .....**

**Date ...11/03/14.**

**Please keep a copy of this consent form with the information sheet.**

**Contact details:** Helen Childerhouse  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Arundel Building, City Campus  
Sheffield. S1 2NE.  
Tel: 0114 225 6252  
Email: [h.childerhouse@shu.ac.uk](mailto:h.childerhouse@shu.ac.uk)



## Appendix M

### Map of provision of intervention/support in each of the four schools<sup>15</sup>

School A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small group and individual</li><li>• Behaviour management skills</li><li>• Circle Time</li><li>• Lego/Science clubs</li><li>• Therapeutic support</li></ul>
School B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small group and individual</li><li>• Circle Time</li><li>• Behaviour management skills</li><li>• SEAL</li><li>• Nurture Groups</li><li>• Parent support sessions*</li><li>• Theraplay</li></ul>
School C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small group and individual</li><li>• Circle Time</li><li>• Behaviour management skills</li><li>• SEAL</li><li>• Nurture Groups</li><li>• Parent support sessions*</li><li>• Bereavement counselling</li><li>• Young Carers' support</li><li>• Drop in sessions for parents and carers</li></ul>
School D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small group and individual</li><li>• Circle Time</li><li>• Behaviour management skills</li><li>• SEAL</li><li>• Nurture Groups</li><li>• Parent support sessions*</li><li>• Bereavement counselling</li><li>• Young Carers' support</li><li>• Drop in sessions for parents and carers</li><li>• Lego club</li><li>• Therapeutic support</li></ul>

<sup>15</sup> This map is based on what I saw, or was told, was provided to support learners identified with SEN and SEBD. I am not able to verify or confirm if these aspects were available or if they were delivered in the way in which I perceived.

\* Parent support groups included cookery classes, literacy and maths skills, parenting skills, family workshops, family nurture groups